MRS. MONTAGU

"QUEEN OF THE BLUES"

Her Letters and Friendships
from 1762 to 1800, edited by
Reginald Blunt

Written at a time when letter-writing was a fine art, this correspondence brings to life the whole charmed circle of wits and writers, statesmen and "bluestockings" that revolved about the famous salon of Elizabeth Montagu.

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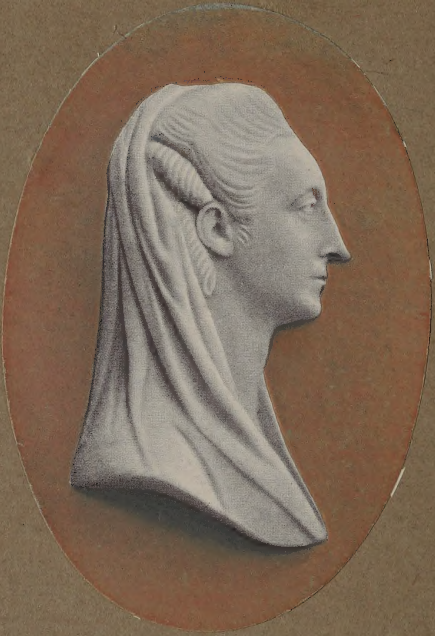
MRS. MONTAGU

"QUEEN OF THE BLUES"



MRS. MONTAGU, 1775
Reproduced from the original Medallion mould
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"QUEEN OF THE BLUES"

HER LETTERS AND FRIENDSHIPS FROM 1762 TO 1800

EDITED BY

REGINALD BLUNT

FROM MATERIAL LEFT TO HIM BY HER GREAT-GREAT-NIECE

EMILY J. CLIMENSON

VOLUME II

1777–1800

> "Foin d'Amphitryon où l'on ne dîne pas !"
> *Les Deux Sosies,*
> JEAN DE ROTROU, 1636.

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THE BLUE STOCKINGS

Origin of the name. Stillingfleet hose. The *Bas Bleu*. Mrs. Vesey's assemblies. The Blue Room. The Lodge and the Society. A reported dispute. Mr. Percy. Mrs. Vesey's downy wing. Mrs. Garrick and Hannah More. Mrs. Vesey's decline. Richard Cumberland. The move from Hill Street to Portman Square. The Club. Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Vesey.

A FEW notes and extracts referring to the much-discussed subject of "The Blue Stockings," about which a good deal of speculative derivation has been written, will probably be expected in these pages. The subject has, however, been dealt with individually and in detail by M. Huchon, Dr. Doran, Mr. E. R. Wheeler, Mr. Fyvie, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, and many other writers, leaving little that need be added here, save a few of Mrs. Montagu's own references to the coterie, to which, of course, other allusions will be found scattered through her letters generally. Though there was doubtless a Venetian Société de la Calza in the fifteenth century whose members, when assembled for discussion, amused themselves by donning fantastic stockings, and particularly blue ones; and though Mr. Pennington in his Memoir of Mrs. Carter declares that the appellation was not conferred on Mrs. Montagu's and Mrs. Vesey's assemblies till after Mr. Benjamin Stillingfleet's death in 1771, it seems very probable that the term, in its eighteenth-century English use, did originate in that gentleman's appearance at these parties in the grey-blue stockings which he was wont to wear, and which led Admiral Boscawen to dub the gatherings (of which his wife was an original member) as the "Blue Stocking Society." As early as 1757, indeed, Mrs. Montagu writes to Dr. Monsey: "Our friend Mr. Stillingfleet is more attached to the lilies of the field than the lilies of the town, who toil and spin as little as the others, and like the former are better arrayed than Solomon in all his glory. I assure you our philosopher is so much a man of pleasure, he has left off his old friends and his blue stockings and is at operas and other gay assemblies every night." Though Hannah More's "Bas Bleu" verses were not actually published till 1786 they were written many years earlier, and Mrs. Montagu's letters contain several references to the title during Stillingfleet's life.

Hannah More and Mrs. Carter, indeed, appear to have agreed that the Bas Bleu title originated in a French visitor, who had been invited to one of these parties, being informed that dress was so unimportant that he might go, if he pleased, in blue stockings. This may be a true derivation of the French title which Miss More gave to her Poem, addressed to Mrs. Vesey and her sister Blues; but there is no doubt that the English synonym was in use long previously to denote half dress; and was indeed applied by a contemporary chronicler as far back as 1683 to "that Blue Stocking Barebones Parliament, a company of fellows called together by Cromwell," where it implies puritanically plain or mean attire. On the other hand, I have not found that the French equivalent was used, as has been suggested, in connection with the Précieuses of the Hôtel Rambouillet; and it seems to me more probable that old Admiral Boscawen revived the earlier English epithet in allusion to the Stillingfleet hose, than that it was imported from Paris or adopted from a Frenchman's phrase.

There was never any Blue Stocking "Club," though the title has frequently been used; and the name was merely coined to describe the gatherings at which certain well-known ladies presided—notably

Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Vesey, Mrs. Ord, and Mrs. Boscawen—where cards and politics were tabooed and informal literary conversation was encouraged. Strict etiquette in dress was waived (hence the Stillingfleet stockings) and refreshment (if any) was confined to "coffee, chocolate, biscuits, cream, butter, toasts, and exquisite tea," as Madame du Bocage has described.

Mrs. Montagu herself seems to have been puzzled over the origin of Hannah More's *Bas Bleu*. "I should suppose blue stockings were meant," she writes to Mrs. Carter, "but what connection has stockings with conversation? I do not think the French ever wear blue stockings. . . . Pray explain this matter, for I perplexed my head in vain about it."

Mrs. Elizabeth Vesey, one of the leading members of the blue-stocking coterie, was the daughter of the Bishop of Ossory and the wife of Agmondesham Vesey, M.P. for Harristown and Kinsale, member of Dr. Johnson's Club and amateur of architecture—and pretty women. Mrs. Vesey's impulsive spirit and vivacity, and the hatred of constraint and formalities which earned her the name of "the Sylph," are echoed in her letters, of which a large packet to Mrs. Montagu survives in this collection. They dart about, unstopping and unstopped, from Lucan to Sandleford, from Monsey to Montaigne, from English to French, from absurdities to sublimities, with the quick, delicate grace of the birds she loved. And her parties, given at one period on the Tuesdays of the Club dinners, so that its members could join her circle afterwards, were equally various and discursive. Wraxall says that simplicity both of manner and dress and a sort of oblivious inattention to things passing under her very sight were her characteristic features; and that her lack of memory and absence of mind reached the point of forgetting her own name, and inveighing against second marriages to a twice-married lady of quality, she herself being in the same situation.

Fanny Burney found her fear of ceremony really troublesome ; " her eagerness to break up a circle is such that she insists upon everybodys sitting with their backs to one another, that is the chairs are drawn into little parties of three together, in a confused manner, all over the room."

To Mrs. Vesey

HILLSTREET, *March* 17 (1764 ?).

I receive such charming letters from the blue stocking Lodge, that I begin to be jealous for the Original society. You seem to imitate the Jesuits of Paraguay, who became infinitely more rich and great than the Country from whence they went out a small colony. The imitation of Dr. Young is admirable. I may say the imitation is inimitable, for it has all possible marks of resemblance and yet is not mere mimickry, and that is hard to hit. I find Mr. O Hara reveres as he ought the blue stockings of the Peripatetick philosophers ; Mr. Caulfield the blue hose which encircles the nimble and taper leg of une jolie paisanne. I am not sure therefore that he is worthy of our society, however as he may be only an elegant spectator of forms, or consider blue stockings as the least deviation from the simplicity of the golden age, I am glad he is received into the Lodge, and I think we may admit him of the Colledge in time.

To Mrs. Carter

December 15th.

I had my pen in my hand on saturday many times with an intention to write to my dear friend, but so frequent, and so long, were the interruptions from Persons calling on me, that it was absolutely impossible. The accidents between the pen and the paper, are so much more common than between the cup and the lip, that whoever considers the matter *soberly* will see the figurative proverb would have been more properly assumed from the pen than the cup.

I hope you have met with an absurd paragraph in the morning Herald, which says, that at Mrs. V—ys the other night, there happend such a dispute between the blue stockings, that had it not been for the timely interference of the unletterd part of the company might have ended very fatally ; that there are now 2 parties of the blue stockings, Mrs. M^{u} at the head of the seceders. The whole of this fine story is the invention of the writer of the paragraph, and I do not find any of the blue stockings from the Tuesdays Club had been [to the] sylphs this winter, except S^{r} Josh: Reynolds, who is not quarrelsome, and had he been so, he would not have had an opportunity of kicking any blue stockings but his own. The Club has met only twice since our dear Veseys came to Town, I was not at her House those evenings, having been hindered one time by my dining Guests staying late with me, another time by a previous engagement at the Burrough's, so my Secession was involuntary. It is strange that these news writers cannot put a little witt into their malice, and a little probability into their lyes. Had there happend to have been a little dispute between a couple of savants on any point of learning I do not see that it would have been an affair at all interesting to the publick, but such an influence has the Good humour and benevolent nature of our Vesey, that Persons of the most contrary dispositions, are harmonized if not brought to unison in her Concerto's of conversation. Her drawing room puts one sometimes in mind of Paradise, where the Lion dandles the Kid. Even Samuel Johnson was seldom brutally rude in her society.

To Mrs. Vesey

HILLSTREET, *Feb. 2nd*, 1768.

Mr. Montagu passd the Xmass at Sandleford, I with the blue stocking philosophers. I had parties of them to dine with me continually, and had my Sylph been of those parties, nothing had been wanting. I have got a new blue stocking with whom I am much pleased, a Mr. Percy who publish'd the Reliques of the ancient Poetry ; he is a very ingenious man, has many anecdotes of ancient days, historical as well as poetical. Mr. Walpoles Historical doubts came out yesterday. I have read about half the book, and have not yet either learnt or unlearnt anything. I think this work appears plainly rather of the growth of Strawberry Hill than of the Forked Hill. I do not mean that the work is not amusing ; by the Courtesy of modern Parnassus one is just soothd and pleased without being delighted or instructed.

To Mrs. Carter

September 4th, 1772.

I am much concern'd for the tender sympathies of our poor Sylph. Such a sad accident must make a terrible impression on her spirits, but I hope the sight of our shore, as she approaches it in October, will revive them. I delight already in the prospect of the blue box (alias Drawing room) in which our Sylph assembles all the heterogenous natures in the World ; and indeed in many respects resembles Paradise, for there the Lion sits down by the Lamb, the Tyger dandles the Kid ; the sly scotchman and the etourdi Hibernian, the Hero and Maccaroni, the Vestal and the demi rep, the Mungo of Ministry and the inflexible partisans of incorruptible Patriots, Beaux esprits and fine Gentlemen all gather together under the downy wing of the Sylph, and are soothed into good humour : were she to withdraw her influence a moment, discord would reassume her reign, and we should hear the clashing of swords, the angry flirting of fans, and S^{r} Andrew and S^{r} Patrick gabbling in dire confusion the different dialects of the Erse language. Methinks I see our Sylph moving in her circle, and by some unknown attraction keeping the whole system in due order. By what art does she thus satisfy the pride of Duchesses, the conceit of Authors, the arrogance of Statesmen, the vanity of beauties, and the unquiet spirits of Coquettes ? for no one leaves her assembly till the Watchman has given repeated warnings to withdraw ! I have as *much in art of this as she*, *but cannot make things thus* ; if I should get all these contraries and contrarieties into my House every evening, five or six duels, five or six scoldings, and five or six libels would be the consequence every winter. My Sylph effects all this by the je ne scai quoi ; the je ne scai quoi is the gift of the Fairies, it is better than all the Muses can teach, the Graces bestow, or Venus impart ; long may she live and flourish in all the powers and potencies of this invincible je ne scai quoi.

Later adherents included Hannah More, whose verses have already been referred to, and we find Mrs. Montagu writing to Mrs. Vesey from Sandleford in July 1784 :

Mrs. Garrick and Miss More have promised to bring their two pair of blue stockings which will do me more honour and I am sure infinitely more pleasure than would be conferrd on me by many blue garters tho accompanied by a Star, if they came to Sandleford. I am sorry Lord Rodney has had the mortification of seeing his Daughter elope to Gretna Green, but I think the Women are all bewitchd this summer.

After Mr. Vesey's death in 1785 his widow abandoned herself to grief so uncontrolled that it gradually undermined her intellect. Mrs. Montagu did all that was possible in the way of constant friendship, companionship, and good counsel to stave off this catastrophe, and one of her letters to this end may be added here ; interesting also in its reference to the after-dinner visits of Johnson's Club :

To Mrs. Vesey

These and many more arguments may be urged from "*Relever La Vieillesse*" in general. You and I have many peculiar reasons not to suffer it with us to fall into dejection, or even languor. The Loves and the Graces, and les jeux and les ris, have indeed forsaken us, but do not the Muses keep a kind correspondence with us by means of all their favourite sons ? After supping Helicon with the nine do they not often condescend to drink tea in Bolton Street or Hill Street ? We have lived much with the wisest, the best, and most celebrated men of our Times, and with some of the best, most accomplished, and most learned Women of any times. These things I consider not merely as pleasures transient, but as permanent blessings ; by such Guides and Companions we are set above the low temptations of Vice and folly, and while they were the instructors of our minds they were the Guardians of our Virtue. Still beloved by many valuable Friends, still desired in the most agreable Society, you should not be cast down. It is with minds as with fruits, such only are good dry'd in the winter, as had no sourness or bitterness in their summer season. The Raisin, in the jar is still sweeter than the grape on the green bough, and the fig in the box, has a richer sweetness than that growing on the tree. We may have lost some of our piquancy, my dear Friend, but while we have nothing sharp or caustique, rough or severe, we shall not be unpleasant even to the Young, and what is still better, not unpleasant to ourselves. For my part I will own, I should find it difficult to say in what season of life I have enjoy'd most happy hours in the day, or days in the week. In my youth my glass rose more degrees above content, now it never falls below it but stands at settled fair. If I was uncertain about your welfare or your friendship for me I should fall to changeable and cloudy weather, so let me hear often from you.

The blue-stocking coterie continued its occasional assemblies far into the 'eighties ; but with the completion of Montagu House, Portman Square, Mrs. Montagu's parties developed greatly in size and grandeur, and lost proportionately in character and interest. Heavy teas were served at long tables in the great drawing-room ; buttered muffins and cold chicken smothered wit. Cowper's verse was wasted on the glories of the wonderful Feather Room, whose hangings had busied Mrs. Montagu's friends to collect and her maids to fashion for years of misspent labour ; and which now replaced the Cupidon Room of Hill Street, which had evoked a little unkindly satire. Richard Cumberland, the dramatist of the *West Indian*, was added to the circle as a guest, welcomed as a new bard, and rewarded his hostess's hospitality by a couple of papers in *The Observer* in which "Vanessa" is held up to a not always good-humoured ridicule, which contrasts unpleasantly with Mrs. Montagu's kindly references to him in her letters.

But the keen, vivacious freshness of the Hill Street evenings gradually evaporated ; the quarrel with Johnson, and his death in 1784, robbed the coterie of its most stimulating possibilities, and Mrs. Montagu's assemblies grew up — inevitably perhaps — into an ultimate maturity that was possibly magnificent but probably rather dull.

There are several gaps in this collection of letters to Mrs. Montagu, which has naturally passed through many hands. Particularly it is noticeable that there are none from Horace Walpole, from whom she must certainly have received some. A number of those from Sir Joshua Reynolds appear to have been destroyed with other papers by an ignorant housekeeper at Denton; and the only one which I have come upon from him may be given here, because it relates to the election of Mrs. Vesey's husband to Johnson's Club, referred to above, as supping Helicon with the nine before they drank tea in Bolton Row or Hill Street. The Club was founded in 1764 by Sir Joshua and Dr. Johnson, and its original members included Burke, Nugent, Langton, Beauclerk, Goldsmith, and Hawkins. Agmondesham Vesey was put up for election in April 1773. Burke proposed him, and began by saying he was a man of gentle manners. "Sir," said Johnson, who had doubtless been already canvassed, "you need say no more. When you have said a man of gentle manners you have said enough." Vesey was elected at the next meeting and continued a member till his death in 1785. Garrick had been elected in the previous month, and Boswell followed Vesey. The day of meeting had been changed from Monday to Friday in the previous year, and a fortnightly dinner instituted at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, Soho, at any rate while Parliament sat. Hawkins says that a lady (who was probably Mrs. Montagu) invited the Club for two successive years to dine at her house, and that it was she who first entitled it The Literary Club. Johnson's interest in it, which was very keen in the earlier years, waned as its membership inevitably increased, and it became more or less a dinner club merely. He had great ideas of its exclusiveness, and his indignation will be remembered when David Garrick said he would be one of them, and seemed to think his election certain.

From Sir Joshua Reynolds

MADAM—Mr. Burke spoke of Mr. Vesey when he proposed him last Friday in the same manner as you have done, and I think in the very words, that he was good humoured, sensible, well bred, and had all the social virtues; it was left for you to say that he was a man of Tast without pretensions and so without jealousy and envy. I have too good an opinion of our club to entertain the least suspicion that such a man will not be unanimously elected.

I have every reason to wish Mr. Vesey success but for none more than your interesting yourself in his favour, and tho' I am very flattered by your applying to me in this affair, you may depend on my religiously observing your injunction.

I am with the greatest respect, Madam, Your most humble and obliged servant, JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

P.S.—Mr. Cumberland is not a member of the Club.

Some writers have been inclined to give almost a propagandist cachet to the "Club" of the blue-stocking ladies, but nothing in these letters of Mrs. Montagu's suggests any such conscious effort for the regeneration of society. She cultivated and enjoyed her literary salon because she was naturally bookish and fond of conversation; but she was too level-headed and had too much common sense for any great enthusiasm about the conquest of cards and claret by the tea-cups of Hill Street and Bolton Row. Though an unkindly critic of Matthew Montagu once described him as "only fit to darn his aunt's blue stockings," one has ignominiously to confess at last that this correspondence does not finally solve the momentous problem, whether the queen of the Blue Stockings ever wore blue stockings at all. Dr. Brewer says so, but he is merely a man. Lady Crewe is said (also by a man) to have stated that she and all the members of the Club adopted blue silk stockings from Madame de Polignac, they being then the newest Paris fashion. Mrs. Montagu herself, as we have seen above, protested that she found Hannah More's *Bas Bleu* unintelligible, and declared her belief that the French never wore blue stockings. These things remain mysterious; my own belief is that Mrs. Montagu's stockings, at their bluest, were not mazarine or cerulean blue. I think they were shot with purple.

But whether she was the sapphire-hosed "Queen of the Blues" or not, it would be quite a mistake to picture our good lady as the promoter of "eternal conversation parties," which her sister stigmatised as "terrible things," or as high priestess of a cult of solemn disquisition. Hannah More has told us that at the coteries might be found "learning without pedantry, good taste without affectation, and conversation without calumny." Mrs. Montagu loved good talk, and that "unreserved interchange of thoughts with a few intimate friends" to which Sir William Forbes has referred. She could thoroughly enjoy such a "contest of gallantry an hour long" as Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Buller fought one night at Mrs. Ord's, to the infinite diversion of the company; and the following extract from a letter to Mrs. Vesey shows a spirit far enough removed from the pedantic solemnity which we are apt to associate with the blues:

> I am peevish, I am splenatick, I am sad; no wonder! when instead of my Sylph I find nothing but Gnomes. Our Midsummer nights dream in the fairy land of Hagley vanishd, where so merry as we twa have been, my heart it does well nigh despair when I think of the days we have seen. Yet we shall meet, I hope, before another November comes. . . . We shall be older, but we wont be wiser; that is we will not wear the sable weeds *of black staid wisdoms hue.* We will laugh with Mr. Garrick; we will be gay with Mr. Burke; We will be happy with Lord Lyttelton and his Hagley; and even in this Tourbillon of London we will enjoy the tranquil pleasures of friendship, when there is not a bal masqué, nor a bal paré nor a gala to seduce us from ourselves. . . .

1777

MONTAGU HOUSE BEGUN—DODD, WARTON, DU DEFFAND, WRAXALL

Letters from Paris. The new house in Portman Square. James Stuart. Mr. Keppel at Bath. Letter from Madame Necker. Return to Sandleford. Lord Chatham's speech. Paying for the new House. Abbé Reynal and Sterne's *Eliza*. Mrs. Montagu moralises. The Primate and Sir T. Robinson's papers. Mr. Barrett. The Americans. Dr. Dodd and Dr. Johnson. The Huntingdon connection. David Montagu Erskine. Smuggled tea. Visit to Winchester School. The Wartons at Sandleford. Visit to Nuneham. The model village. Lord Harcourt drowned. Death of Morris Robinson. Letter from Madame du Deffand. Letter from Nathaniel Wraxall. Mrs. Howe. The Ministry.

THE letters of the early months of 1777 are largely an aftermath of the Paris visit. Amongst the earliest is one from the Comte de Catuelan, who was Letourneur's collaborator in the much-discussed translation of Shakespeare. "Je desire mais n'ose le croire que la main de Versailles qui s'en occupe aujourdhui rende quelque justice à l'original. Le traducteur aura fait assez pour sa gloire et beaucoup pour sa nation." A further letter from Letourneur mentions that "Mr. Benjamin Franklin is here much speaking of the electricity." Franklin's discovery that lightning is electricity had been made more than twenty years before this, but he had just arrived as American Commissioner in Paris, and it was during this year that he, with Lee and Silas Deane, were to achieve the recognition by France of American independence.

"Dressed," as Lecky describes Franklin, "with an almost Quaker simplicity, his thin grey hair not powdered according to the general fashion but covered with a fur cap, he formed a singular and striking figure in the brilliant and artificial society of the French capital. . . . Turgot, in an immortal line, described him as having torn the lightning from Heaven and the sceptre from the tyrant's hand." Mrs. Montagu would have bettered that if her Paris visit had been a year later.

In February Colonel Dromgold writes from Paris that the Prince de Poix was going to London charged with three packets of presents from her friends there ; these included " une tasse et petite benittiere d'or de la porcelaine de Sevre de l'annee on apelle cela Verd d'Angleterre," and a pot au lait from Madame de Rochefort ; and Madame Le Page du Bocage sends a message from the Prince de Gonzages, who hoped to make her acquaintance during his coming stay in England.

It was in this spring that Mrs. Montagu purchased of the Portman family a ninety-nine years' lease of the land at the north-west corner of Portman Square on which her great house (now No. 22) was to be built. She had intended that Mr. Robert Adam should be her architect, but the great man kept her waiting an hour and brought a regiment of talkative artificers, and after some negotiations she decided to employ James Stuart, whose work on the antiquities of Athens had gained for him the name of " Athenian Stuart " ; but neither deeds nor plans are in this collection of papers, and this is the only letter I have come across from her architect :

Mr. Stuart presents his respects to Mrs. Montagu and will do himself the honour of waiting on her next Thursday about noon or sooner, if his surgeon dismisses him sooner.

It looks so much like impudence to sollicit any indulgence at this time, that he hardly knows how to request the honour of seeing her before any other artist is spoken to. how could he hit on the lamentable secret of extracting Shame and uneasiness from what would have afforded him perhaps some credit, and most undoubtedly the highest pleasure, but men do sometimes manage their affairs so as to distress themselves in a most unaccountable manner, and so as to deserve much blame and more pity——

In the letters of May there are references to dedications of two books to Mrs. Montagu, Desenfans' *Fénelon* and Hannah More's volume of *Essays* ; and though Mrs. Montagu pretended to deprecate dedication—" no one but myself believes one word of the fine things they say of me "—she admired Desenfans' defence of Fénelon " against the impertinence and malice of Lord Chesterfield," and Miss More's chapter on " Sentimental Connexion."

Mrs. Montagu went to the Crescent, Bath, in April, where :

> I have the *honour* to lodge in the House where Mr. Keppel reposed on his Portsmouth Lawrels, a circumstance for which Mrs. G: Trevor envies me. The Ladies after every possible honour shewn to the Adml in a sumptuous breakfast made a Pool at Commerce for him, and took care that he should win the Pool ; as his cards were perverse, this was not effected without some difficulty, but they declared that it wd be a shame such a Conqueror shd be beaten even at cards.

Whilst Necker was swept unwillingly into the vortex of French enthusiasm for American Independence and the humiliation of despotic Britain, his wife was writing to Mrs. Montagu in a much more charming strain :

From Madame Necker

A PARIS, *le 6 Janvier.*

Madame—Je mettrai toujours un grand prix a la place qu'occupe Mr. Necker puisqu'elle m'a valu de votre part Madame un honneur auquel je suis infiniment sensible, et je ne me sens point une indifference philosophique pour le genre de distinctions, il ne reste plus a Mr. Necker qu'a justifier la

comparaison ingenieuse dont vous vous servez dans votre aimable lettre, et il y travaille je vous assure avec un Courage infatigable ; Ce qui ne l'empêche pas de penser souvent au plaisir que nous avons eu en recevant en France la muse d'angleterre ; l'amitié qu'elle nous a inspirée, et celle que nous avons ici pour plusieurs personnes respectables de votre nation, nous fait désirer la paix par sentiment, tandis que le devoir de l'humanité nous fait joindre toute la force de la raison à celle de notre penchant ; ainsi Madame j'espere que nous garderons votre ambassadeur, et que vous garderez le nôtre ; mon attachment pour Mylord Stormont me feroit trouver s'il nous quittoit, mon malheur particulier, dans le malheur general.

Mr. de Buffon n'est pas encore de retour à Paris, il y vient de tems en tems pour joindre aux conceptions de son genie antique, le leger coloris que la Société donne, et qui Se renouvelle tous les trois mois, c'est lâ ce qui fait l'agrément de nos conversations, auquel vous avez paru sensible ; on y parcourt rapidement tous les objets, on les presente de coté, et par petites portions, en sorte que les femmes peuvent les mesurer de l'œil, les manier avec leurs mains débiles, et y donner une tournure dont elles ont seules le secret ; mais en angleterre vous leur presentez les affaires en grosse masse, et de front ; et c'est ainsi qu'elles nous effrayent.

Nous sommes ici trez occuppés par l'arrivée du Célébre Piccini, nous imaginons qu'il va nous faire trouver un Sixieme sens ; pour moi je vois avec douleur cette passion pour la musique ; ce langage appartient au Stupide comme à l'homme d'esprit ; chacun l'interprête suivant les pensées qu'il à dans son cerveau, il semble que c'est une mesure Commune qui s'élargit ou se rétrécit selon la personne qui en fait usage, et donne toujours en apparence le même resultat ; notre Theatre francois languit, et moi qui ai vu Mr. Garrick je ne trouve plus au spectacle qu'un sentiment unique et toujours le même, celui du regrêt. je ferai vos Comitions à toutes les personnes qui vous interressent ; agréez l'hommage de Mr. Necker et le mien ; j'ai l'honneur d'etre tres-respectueusement Madame, Votre tres humble et tres obeissante Servante, C. Necker.

permettez que je me rappelle au Souvenir de Mlle Gregori.

Nicola Piccinni, Gluck's famous rival, had reached Paris a little while previously, and his *Roland* was produced there in the following year.

Thanking her sister for sending the good news from America, Mrs. Montagu says that

> Bath reports, like Bath head dresses, (tho in the mode of the times) are a little exaggerated. . . . I just called on Lady Lucy Stanhope on Sunday on my way to Mr. Ansteys as her Ladyship and Mrs. T had made kind enquiries after me. The prim anglicisms of their dress, the plaited mob pinned under their chin, etc., cannot be paralleled but by the Christening trim of some Sage Femme in a country town through which there is not a turnpike road.

Toward the end of May, after a few days in London, Mrs. Montagu went down to Sandleford and "Tranquillity," and concludes a letter to Mrs. Vesey, who was in town :

> Adieu, my dear Sylph ; you see I think of my sins in the country. London is the place for sinning, the country for repentance—a twofold reason why fine Ladies prefer Town ; I shall have strange suspicions if you don't come to Sandleford.

To Mrs. Carter

May the 30.

I am sorry for the account you give of our Custom house duties falling short. I rather hope it was meant only of the American duties, as all parties own we have, on the whole, as much Trade as before this unhappy War. Sr Wm Howe has acquainted our Ministry that he expects soon to be in possession of Philadelphia.

Is not Lord Chatham in everything an extraordinary man ? A few months ago he had not spirits and force of mind to converse with his Children, who are the most gentle, respectful, and dutiful of any in the World, and now he can tell Great Brittain what she shd do with her disobedient and refractory children the Americans.

Howe's extraordinary inactivity, however (which led to repeated expressions of the utmost astonishment in the letters from Washington to his brother), continued long after the season of active operations had opened ; the victory of Brandywine, which if it had been vigorously followed up would, in all likelihood, have meant the destruction of Washington's army, was never completed; and Philadelphia was not occupied till September. This belated campaign ruined the whole scheme of concerted operations. Clinton's force was paralysed, Howe having taken away 4000 of his troops. Burgoyne coming south with the Canada contingent had to fight his way through difficult and hostile country, was trapped at Saratoga, and had there to surrender his entire force on October 17. The disaster was fatal, if not final.

To Mrs. Vesey

SANDLEFORD, *June the 1st.*

My sincere thanks for the account you and your Secretary gave me of the great day in the House of Lords. If one is too far off St James's and St Stephens to catch the sympathies with Ministers, or Patriots, one is always entertain'd with a great day in the House of Lords; it is genteel comedy, a species of drama very agreable to all people of elegant taste. I hear that Lord Chatham was follow'd by applauding Multitudes to the door of the House of Lords, which I am glad of. He did his Country great service in the last War, and one is glad to see there is a grateful remembrance of it. Historians have praised a Roman Senator for going, when old and blind, to the Senate, to exhort to War; an old Lame Senator who councils peace seems to act more suitably to his condition and the wary wisdom of age. Old Appius might have sounded the Warlike Trumpet if he had not been blind, but I think it required a little gout, and a great deal of flannel, to dignify the idea of humbly sending a Herald to ask pardon of the Americans; the proposal has a sublime in it that would not be relish'd by the World in general. I earnestly recommend this temper to the Archbishop who says he cannot govern his passions. One is ashamed to see a spirit so bearing, and forbearing, in a Politician, and one so impatient in a Minister of the Gospel. In the Country Lambs are always gentle, and Wolves are fierce.

Whilst Mrs. Montagu was spending a tranquil summer at Sandleford, her new house was making rapid progress, the walls being well above ground in June, and: "I flatter myself it will be covered in before Christmas. There is a well of fine water found which will be a great convenience." From a letter to Mrs. Vesey her intentions about paying for it out of income are made clear:

> You know I had always as much tenderness for Mr. Vesey as one ought to have, but his goodness in coming to Sandleford will make me love him more than decorum will allow me to express. Thank him for me a thousand times. I want his advice too about some alterations to be made. I had intended to begin this summer, but my new House will employ all my spare money, as it is rearing. I mean in the space of three years, to make up from my income, the difference between that House and what my Habitation in Hillstreet will sell for, added to a small sum I have in India Bonds. I confess this is not necessary, as I could borrow; but writing Eliz Montagu to bond or Mortgage wd appear to me a masculine action, rather like swearing such an oath as Ventre blue, or odsbodikins; no real harm, but merely an indecorum; however as this is only a matter of punctilio, if Mr. Stuart outruns the Constable I shall not feel a moments real concern about it. I am uneasy least this wet weather should retard my building. . . .
>
> A thousand thanks for Mr. Garricks very pretty verses. I was glad to see something address'd to the Dss of D: of which the witt and good nature wd make her amends for the austerity and dullness of some things in prose which have been addressd to her Grace.

Garrick's Aurora verses have already been quoted.

Mrs. Vesey's French was even more her own than Mrs. Montagu's:

From Mrs. Vesey

> . . . the Abbe Reinel tells me the Marquis de la Fayete has made his escape a second time to America, that the Ladies there admire the romantick spirit for they are all Americans c'est a dire l'Amerique est leur eventail et leur chapeau car on ne scait pas si l'Amerique est a la Pole ou au Midy, cet Abbe admire l'Angleterre surtout M et Mdm Montagu, il dit que les D Francaises sont plus amusante pour la premiere

heure plus de vivacite plus des Epigrams mais les Angloises ont l'esprit si cultive si accompli que leur sagesse leur conversation si douce si instructive qu'on gagne l'estime et le cœur. he is very well acquainted with you I suppose, and is in love with Sterns Eliza—I shall tell you some of his stories next time.

The Abbé Raynal was the author of that extraordinary hotchpotch in six volumes, *Histoire . . . des Européens dans les deux Indes*, which was published in 1772, and in which Diderot is supposed to have had a considerable hand. Horace Walpole said it tells one everything in the world with spirit, wit, and clearness, and all is so mixed you learn forty new trades and fifty new histories in a single chapter. But when he met the Abbé at d'Olbach's dinner-table in Paris, and he began to bombard him with questions across the table about the Colonies, Horace—more shy of his French than our ladies—feigned deafness, was found out later, and never forgiven. Dr. Johnson had no use for the frivolous Abbé: "I have read his book, and I have nothing to say to him."

Mrs. Draper, Sterne's Eliza, had made the acquaintance of Abbé Raynal whilst she was in England, and he had fallen an ecstatic victim—not exactly to her charms, for, according to Sterne, "You are not handsome, Eliza, nor is yours a face that will please the tenth part of your beholders. But you are something more. I never saw so intelligent, so animated, so good a countenance. A something in your voice and eyes you possess in a degree more persuasive than any woman I ever saw, read or heard of; but it is that bewitching sort of nameless excellence that *men of nice sensibility alone* can be touched with." The Abbé—himself described as a disorderly cleric though not, as Sterne had been, as "an irrecoverable scoundrel"—avowed that no woman ever owned so many graces, and that even her own sex joined in her praise. She possessed, he declared, "that almost incompatible harmony of voluptuousness and decency which diffused itself over all her person and accompanied all her motions." This paragon among women after her return from Sterne's idolatry to India and a husband, eloped with the captain of a Navy sloop, then came to England, published Yorick's letters to her (but not her own), flirted with the Abbé and with Wilkes, and died in 1778, when only thirty-five. "Genius and Benevolence," her epitaph in Bristol Cathedral declares, "were united in her": attributes a little difficult to reconcile with what we know of her story; but it is possible that it was her infatuated Abbé who erected this shrine to her memory; and if the "Genius" has to be somewhat discounted, the balance may well be adjusted by crediting her on occasion with a little too much "Benevolence."

After her elopement from Madras, and a year or so spent with her extraordinary uncle John Whitehill at Masulipatam, Mrs. Draper returned to England at the end of 1774, and appears to have spent the last years of her short life in Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square; but I have looked in vain through the correspondence of this period for any reference to her from the cousin of her old flame Laurence Sterne, though Mrs. Draper had expressed her high appreciation of Mrs. Montagu's literary work, and declared "she would rather be an attendant on her person than the first Peeress of the realm." To what extent she was received in the society of the day there is little evidence to show, but, as the authors of the very interesting volume *Sterne's Eliza* point out, the acceptance by the dour ascetic Lord Chancellor Apsley of the dedication of her *Letters from Yorick to Eliza* in 1775 seems to indicate the establishment of a reputable status. Eliza's real Letters to Yorick, of which she had with such difficulty prevented the publication by Mrs. Sterne (whom she declared Yorick to have stigmatised to her as "a Drinker a

Swearer . . . and Unchaste, though in point of understanding and finished address supposed to be inferior to no woman in Europe "), would have been of the greatest interest, but must be presumed beyond recovery, those published under that title being apparently, like the second Lord Lyttelton's, an impudent concoction of William Combe's or some one of that ilk.

Contrasted in many essentials as of course they were, an interesting comparison may be traced in the characters of Mrs. Montagu's much-loved Sylph and Sterne's dear Eliza. In the vivacity and light discursive charm of their letters the two women had much in common. Both were naturally sprightly, vivid women of pretty fancies and delicate humour. Both sought for and basked in the sunshine of social success and admiration. Both suffered from exacting and faithless husbands. Both came under the spell, and captured the admiration, of the same two remarkable literary characters, Laurence Sterne and Abbé Raynal. But—and one must admit it is a crucial but—whilst Mrs. Draper deliberately left her husband for Commodore Sir John Clerke and freedom on H.M.S *Prudent* and, as it seems, a good deal of subsequent happiness, Mrs. Vesey clung desperately to her attractive but selfish " Monster " to the bitter end, submitted to all his procrastinating follies, condoned his mistresses, forgave his extravagances, and passed from unchecked weeping to gradual imbecility after his death. The contrast is as interesting as the resemblances; but the moral we had better leave severely alone.

In the way of stone-throwing from glass houses Mrs. Draper's strictures on Mrs. Sterne's morality discourage emulation.

A letter from Mrs. Vesey of about this date may be given here, both as an example of her discursive gossip and also for the allusion to Abbé Raynal, of whose reception by Mrs. Montagu she was a little dubious:

Wednesday 28*th* (*May*).

I received your letter My dear Friend last night too late to answer it as I dined at Kew. Mrs. Hatton acting Cleopatra saild under our windows to the sound of flutes—the day incessant rain, but had every nymph her Anthony I believe poor Cupid would have been heartily weary of being boxed up 12 hours where the company labourd under the call of diverting themselves; as there was no such demand in our little causerie I was very sorry when the Royal summons struck seven, especially as we talkd a great deal of you. . . . as there was only the Family I think I liked Lady Cl. more than ever; nature has given her a good breeding which she has not embroiderd because she did not want it, neither has she added the affected caution and reserve of a court; she and her Mistres seem to confide in their own hearts for pleasing without imprudence or torturing the heaven born gifts of unstudied attentive civility, that looks so like truth and good nature. I cannot think of such a character without saying something of dear charming Gregory. Do you know I envy her your letter? she would have it back again and it was not without something—I don't know what—that I returned it. Perhaps it was however that you wrote so well.—how she loves you! and how pleasant it must be to you to see the heart you have snatched from a shipwreck so entirely devoted to you; it tells so much for both; my eyes fill—so I will proceed to my London Gazette which disdains a subject that promises so little fun.

All the bon ton Dames and Mess^{rs} went last opera night to Bedlam, from thence adjourned to the Gallery of the Opera in their Hats and half Sacks and from thence to sup at Vauxhall, and a night of dreadful weather it was. The next day a Lady askd another to call upon her at Marshes the Dentists to carry her to breakfast at Miss Floids Kensington, as Husband was going out of town and she had no carriage. The friend calld at the appointed hour and found the Lady rushing out of Marshs door all disheveld followd by her husband, both of them went into the friends coach, who was entreated by the husband to carry him and his lady home which was performed in disconsolate silence—It is said the husband changed his mind about going out of town and coming to Marshes found a certain Captain who had also occasion for the dentist. These are not acquaintance of yours or people who anybody cares about so I will not go on in acting the Morning Post by setting their names, least the gentlemen of the office may be curious. Dont let your nightingales hear these stories . . . as to Messrs the Cuckoo and Magpie they are heartily welcome to it. Abbe Reynal is to be here this evening with 3 of his friends who go off Saturday to Oxford, Bath Bristol Ireland, but I shall not give them the least hint that Sandleford is in the way or I am sure you would have a visit and I am not sure you would like it. I shall also see Garrick and Burke; the first I shall flatter with your approbation of his Serenade, for the latter I wish I could find some enlivening cordial. Mr. William Burke went off last week to India overland to join a person at Paris who is going about the Companies service till Mr. Rumbold arrives who goes by sea. . . . I admire the spirit of the man who at once seizes the resolution (tho passd the meridian of life) to . . . restore the drooping fortunes of his friend and kinsman. They have long made one common purse. Edmund is so touchd with this generous act, and the loss of so dear a friend that I could hardly keep from tears when I saw him.

Lady Clermont (who became Viscountess in the preceding year) was much attached to the Queen. The charming Miss Gregory's "shipwreck" was, as we know, only postponed. Bedlam, save the mark, was amongst the shows of London at a penny or twopence a head. Garrick's Serenade was that to the Duchess of Devonshire already quoted. William Burke, Edmund's kinsman, was amongst the many to whom the "Letters" of Junius were attributed. He did not return from India till 1792.

The versatile Abbé Raynal had evidently met Mrs. Montagu, and had called at her house in Hill Street before starting on the western tour referred to in the above letter:

From Sandleford, May 26, she wrote:

Have you seen l'Abbé Raynal since he came to London? He is like his works, which all authors are not. You will find him very acute, very ingenious, very agreable. My Porter sent his name in the list of those who have calld at my door since I left Town. If I had not been engaged to Madam Tranquillity I shd have regretted being absent.

She and the Abbé had made acquaintance during her stay in Paris in 1776; and Lord Shelburne invited her to Bowood this July to meet him again.

The tranquillity of Sandleford gave Mrs. Montagu dangerous facilities for epistolary moralising, a habit which her correspondents delighted to encourage but which would certainly be found intolerably boring to-day. Horace Walpole once said maliciously of her: "Aspasia has both knowledge and wit, with many virtues; but mercy on us! they are both indefatigably for ever at our service."

Thus she begins a letter to Mrs. Carter on June 30:

> I have heard that people seldom are displeasing when they are pleased. I wish it was as certain, that if, in a retired situation, one is not ennuyé one is not ennuyeuse. I have not felt a moments ennui in this deep retirement, but whether I may not give it to my correspondents is not so certain.

Despite the uncertainty, however, she proceeds to a lengthy disquisition on the sublimity of the ocean, that liquid element which (Mrs. Carter said) excluded her from the world on one side at Deal; and having ploughed the deeps for two pages, she goes on to deal with Mr. Gibbon and Les Philosophes in this style:

> It is truly ridiculous that while the present race of Philosophers inveigh so much against the zeal of the Christians, in putting some Mexicans to death on account of religion, it appears by authentic accounts that about 2500 Human Victims were annually sacrificed in Mexico. Mr. Gibbons talks of the elegant Greek Mythology. Jupiter making love in the shape of a Bull at one time, running away with a pretty boy in his beak at another, and Madam Juno scolding him for his vagaries. Bacchus so drunk he could not tell what they were talking of, and Venus Cuckolding her good Man, appear strange instances of elegance in divine Persons. Your friends the Greeks were often very cruel in War. I hope you will

> pardon me, that I could never be quite angry at Lysander for putting his 3000 Prisoners to death, tho it gave a sad shock to yr darling Athens. The Athenians were, at that time, detestable to the highest degree. . . .

And so on for another two or three pages of amiable meandering.

Mrs. Montagu was not amongst the crowd of sentimental sympathisers who wept over the unfortunate Dr. Dodd, the fashionable preacher of his day, who had, unfortunately, forged Lord Chesterfield's name for £4000, and who, after an extraordinary eruption of Thoughts in Prison, Addresses, Speeches, Declarations, Observations, Petitions, and a Last Solemn Account and Dying Words, was unfortunately hanged on June 27 of this year. The writer of a very interesting leader in the *Times Literary Supplement* on Dodd's Occasional Papers said recently of him:

> The Dictionary of National Biography, in its terse way, describes our hero as "Dodd, William, forger." The verdict is just. If Dodd had not forged a bond he would not have gained admittance to the national museum; he would have survived obscurely as the editor of "Beauties of Shakespeare." But it is true also that if he had not been a consummate hypocrite no mere forgery could have saved him. As it was, all the materials of melodrama were present, and every man and woman in London was ready with pity or abuse. Technicalities arose, concerning the admissibility of evidence, which gave a legal interest to what had seemed a simple case. The injured party, Lord Chesterfield, and the Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield, were both suspected of animus against the criminal. When the verdict and sentence were no longer in doubt, the greatest writer in England gave his powerful support to the popular cry for mercy. The speech which Dodd delivered in the Recorder's Court, when sentence of death was about to be pronounced, was written by Samuel Johnson. Johnson wrote also petitions from Dodd to the King and from his wife to the Queen, a petition from the City of London, and other pieces. Finally Earl Percy presented a national petition with twenty thousand signatures. The King is said to have wavered, but

in the end the reprieve was refused. Attempts were then made to effect an escape, and finally to secure, by the connivance of the executioner, that the hanging should be such as to admit of resuscitation. This was actually tried, but failed. He died on June 27, 1777.

The imaginative sympathy and the forensic ability with which Samuel Johnson wrote for Dodd's cause and worked for his reprieve, though he must have known him to be a canting humbug, forms a very interesting study. Writing in July, Mrs. Montagu says:

> The great interest made for poor Dr. Dodd and the Perreans [two brothers hung for the same offence previously to Dr. Dodd] is a symptom amongst many, that we are rather moved by sentiment than governed by principle. . . . Did you see Lady Huntingdon's absurd letter to the Dr.? she tells him if he feels an assurance of being saved his tribulation will become matter of glory and triumph. The tribulation of being hanged for a great Crime is a strange subject to convert into glory and triumph.

To Mrs. Carter she writes:

> I agree with you that Dr. Dodds last speech was such as gave one hope he was a sincere penitent and though a very frail, not a maliciously wicked man;

and to her sister she adds:

> It is difficult to say whether Dod hanged or unhanged will disgrace the clergy most, but I rather think, as the punishment cannot farther extend the knowledge of the crime, that cutting off this rotten branch will leave the body more entire. As to the Man himself, worthless as he is, one pitties him. He seems so little able to endure the chastisement his crimes have merited, that he is truly not worth hanging, a phrase I had always thought before too severe to be applied to any man. I think it will be decent to make the execution private.

Apropos to the above reference to Lady Huntingdon the following undated letter may be introduced here as giving an impression, more curious than sympathetic, of the management of her Chapel at Bath.

From her Sister

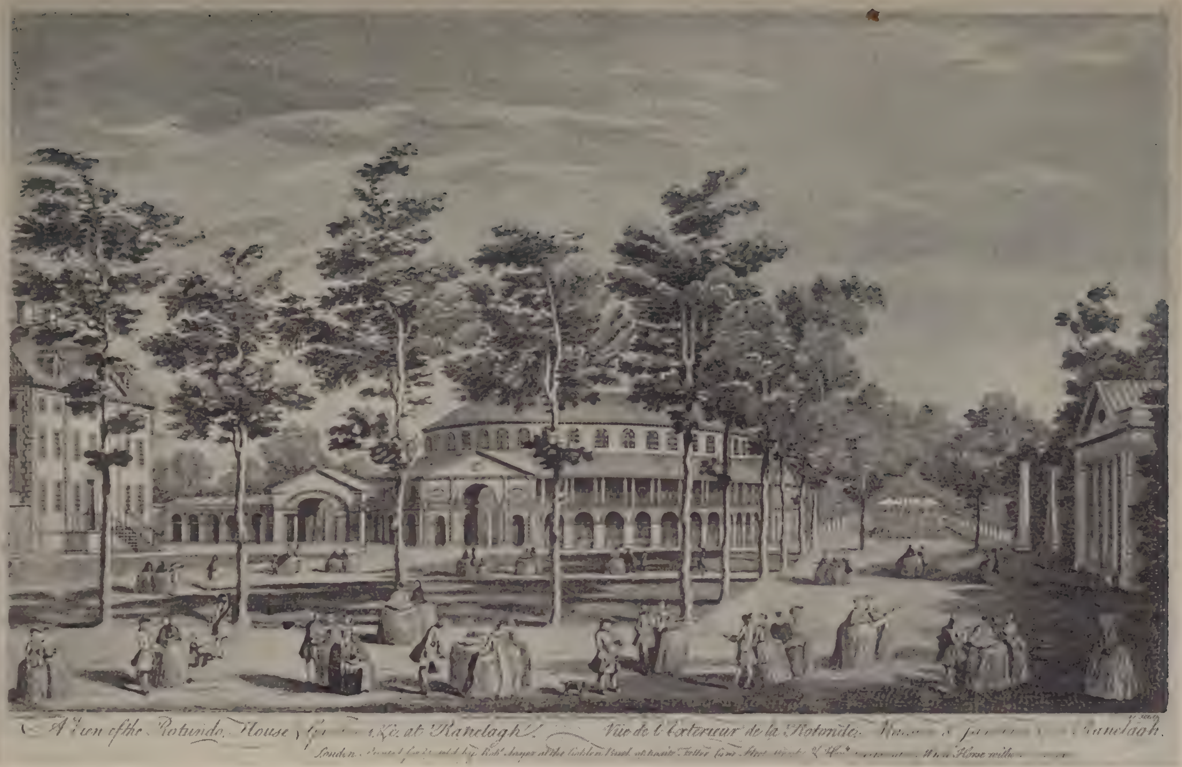
Lady Huntingdon has procured us a great deal of room at Church, for her Chapel takes off vast numbers, and while it is excessively crouded enables one to sit much at ones ease in all the other places for divine service, which before was far from the case. Maddan has preached there for some weeks, but is now gone, and I hope in his absence it will be less frequented. At seven o'clock on Sunday mornings there is a service designed only for the Saints, wherein none of the Church Prayers are used ; a Sinner or two have gone in by mistake, and been beheld with holy horror, and pious contempt ; if you do not know what that is the Methodists can teach you. At eleven the Liturgy is read as in other Churches, and their own Tabernacle, and all the fine people go ; Lady Ann Erskine Daughter to Lord Buchan generally seats the Company, in whose tickets there is some distinction. At six in the Evening on Sundays, and many week days, but no fixed ones,—it being given out from the desk, as the ensuing plays are on the Stage,—the same service is perform'd, the croud then of common people is not only great but disorderly, they sometimes not only quarrel but fight ; yet the Preacher in their own phrase speaks with so much power that one meets the Audience in their way home most cordially united, hand in hand, arm in arm, or still more tenderly ; for love you know is the substance of their doctrine. I know an ordinary Girl who was little less than picked up in the very Chapel ; such of the common people as are not inclined to be of the sect, and go only out of curiosity, do not seem to look upon it as a Church, for they would not behave in the same manner at any other. The Moravians likewise under Kitty Edwin's auspices have opened a new Chapel just by me, but are less fashionable, tho' I should think mighty comfortable. The first Sunday they had at a proper hour a publick breakfast in their Church, a Tea pot as big as a Caldron, and great plenty of toast and butter, and proper eatables, and all performed their parts with great attention and alacrity. At eleven they had their service, and in the afternoon met again and regaled with Cake and Wine ; and in the Evening met a second time to Prayers ; a fine composition this ! a layer of gluttony, then a layer of devotion ; and so through the day ; I have not heard whether the same eating ceremonies are performed every Sunday, or whether it was a more than common feast to sanctify the new Chapel ; but really it is very sociable. If Kate has not interest enough to be made a Peeress, I think her Chapel will do less harm than the other, as it attracts few.

Martin Madan, the barrister who adopted Methodism after hearing a sermon by Wesley, became closely associated with Lady Huntingdon. He was chaplain of the Lock Hospital for thirty years, and was the author of *Thelyphthora*, which advocated polygamy, and shocked Cowper.

Mrs. Montagu's much-revered cousin, the Primate, was just now staying at Lord Darlington's near Rokeby, and had succeeded in obtaining possession (at a price) of the family letters and papers of Sir Thomas Robinson, his recently deceased brother, which were presumably in the hands of the solicitors of Mr. Morritt to whom Rokeby had been sold. As Sir Thomas had known all the great world of his time, had been intimate with Lord Chesterfield, and almost an inmate of Ranelagh for many years, one cannot help regretting the destruction of these papers ; but the Primate seems to have convinced himself that it would not do to risk their falling into indiscreet hands, and that, against this, fire was the safest preservative.

Thomas Pitt, Lord Chatham's nephew and the member for Old Sarum, who combined dislike of his uncle with bitter opposition to Lord North and the coalition, writes from Mount Edgcumbe, July 25 :

Having been for a day or two at Mt. Edgecumbe I have had what they call, an *inkling* of your intended Western excursion, which the last post confirms by Letter from Harrow. In that case may I presume to hint only that a Turnpike road of five and twenty miles leads from Mt Edgecumbe to Boconnoc, which notwithstanding hills and dales may bring you easily to us by dinner. Moreover I recommend to you by all means to come and shelter yourself in the gloom and repose of my


A View of the Rotunda House, … &c. at Ranelagh.
Vüe de l'Exterieur de la Rotonde … Ranelagh.
London. Printed for & sold by Robt. Sayer at the Golden Buck opposite Fetter Lane Fleet Street

RANELAGH ROTUNDA AND GARDENS

After Canaletto

woods after all the glare and glory of this place. it will serve you as Coffee after Champagne and make you fit to return soberly to the Eastern World. Mrs. Pitt will have the honour to present you with the freshest nosegay of her Shrubbery and think herself highly flatter'd.

The following, it is conjectured, refers to Mr. William Barrett, the Bristol surgeon and antiquary who accepted the Rowley manuscripts from Chatterton:

From Lord Nuneham

NUNEHAM, *July 25th.*

Not having been ever more than once, in Mr. Walpole's company, nor having ever even left my name at his door, it was not possible for me to obey the honour of your commands in giving Mr. Barret a letter of recommendation to him, but I have spoke to my Father, who will write to him by the next mail, and has promised that he will mention Mr. Barret in the most favourable manner, and request of Mr. Walpole to shew him every civility and mark of attention in his power; so that this recommendation will at least be as advantageous, nay more so, than a formal introductory letter from me.

For fear Mr. Barret might have waited for this letter, I have written to him by the last post to inform him of the reasons which prevented my obeying the orders you had honoured me with, and of my father's intention of writing to Mr. Walpole. . . .

The manuscript collection of the rather credulous Bristol antiquary, with various Chatterton contributions, was published in the form of a *History of Bristol* in 1789. Without the slightest desire to take up any cudgel on behalf of Horace Walpole, one must admit that he was rather unfairly loaded with responsibility for the fate of that unlucky young genius. Walpole was no philanthropist. His interest in the poems sent him was primarily antiquarian; when Gray and Mason pronounced the specimens sent them as modern, and Chatterton hinted that he might find him some more congenial work, Walpole promptly advised him to stick to his attorney last in Lambert's office and defer the manufacture of antiques till he had made a fortune: advice that would have been echoed by the vast majority of the men who consider themselves "practical." The author of the *Castle of Otranto* was quite capable of filling any demand for literary frauds himself.

Twentieth-century Americans will be grateful for the following explanation of their hereditary limitations:

To Mrs. Carter

Aug. the 10*th.*

You will think me perhaps a little severe in what I have said of the Americans, I speak of them in general; there are some individuals in all Countries as excellent as the weakness of human nature will allow: But where there has not subsisted a good form of government and a regular system of Laws and mode of manners the people in general never are of a good character. Many of the Americans are descended from Ancestors who fled from settled government and establishd religion to follow their wayward fancies; to these have been added a motley crew of Bankrupts, of offenders of all kinds, of schemers and visionary adventurers, or desultery wanderers. No general resemblance of character, no general object of pursuit, no traditional opinions or habits, if I may be allowd the expression, establishd any uniformity of conduct. Many causes of adhesion and cohesion were wanting in the Community. Considered therefore in a Social view they were not in good training. That some virtues will thrive in such circumstances I will allow, but not the best. There is hardly any vegetable substance that has not enough of an acid quality and fermenting principle to make Vinegar, but generous Wine cannot be made but of what has been planted with judgment, nursed with care, and matured by a succession of Seasons favourable to its nature.

Lord Erskine's eldest son, afterwards the second Baron Erskine, was born this summer, and Lord Erskine wrote asking Mrs. Montagu to be his godmother. He was christened David Montagu.

From Lord Erskine

September 21.

You have with great ingenuity & politeness conferred on me a very particular Honour & obligation, under the modest form of a request; which I was too much flattered by to trust the fulfillment of to the future; when the present offered an opportunity. Besides I have too much Spirit to defraud a Gentleman of an Honour, when he is too young, and too weak to resent the injury. Lord Buchan is (by desire) to be his God Father, His Name is David, & I beg you will permitt me to join with it the Name of Montagu, as a mark of the Honor you do both him, & his Father. As I have already a Daughter named Elizabeth, I do not regret his Sex on this occasion; more especially as you possess the accomplishments of both, & can afford equal Instruction, & Example to either.

The Baptism shall be tomorrow, or when you please, by presence, or by proxy, as shall be most convenient and agreeable.

The ethics of contraband are difficult, but one is wickedly pleased to find so good a citizen as Mrs. Montagu succumbing to its temptation; this is to her sister:

You may get me a couple of pounds of good smuggled tea at Margate and send to London; when I have paid you for it I shall drink it with a safe conscience. I dare say you will be delighted with walking on the Sea shore. I began Mr. Cook's Voyage the other day, but I was soon surfeited with his sea fowl; I am glad to find they disgusted you. I hope the 2^{d} vol is more entertaining.

Captain James Cook's *Second Voyage towards the South Pole and round the World*, with Furneaux's narrative of the *Adventure* after she had separated from the *Resolution*, was published in two volumes quarto this year.

It will be noticed that, though her friend Mrs. Carter was living at Deal in the very midst of a lively contraband trade with which she was in constant contact, it is to her sister at Margate that she writes for smuggled tea. No doubt our naughty little lady knew well that the friendship of her good virgin of Deal would have been strained almost to breaking-point by such a request, for her nephew proudly records: "She never smuggled the minutest article either directly or indirectly, nor would ever purchase anything even from a public shop which she had reason to believe had been so obtained."

> I went to Winchester yesterday, on purpose to take a survey of the school; I could judge only how it was calculated for health and sobriety and I am much pleased with it. The school room, the room they eat in, the place in which they play, are all excellent for the purpose, but what pleases me most is, that Dr. Warton having them in the House they cannot go to the Tavern at night like the Etoners, indeed the Winchester boys look as Children ought to do, modest bashfull and humbly apparelled. Dr. Warton that he might attend on me gave the boys a play, which is an extraordinary compliment. The great Boys are all readers of my essay, so were very curious to see me, and I dare say, now I have got them a play, they will like the book much better than before.
>
> . . . When you write to Mrs. Bowdler, say I saw a copy of Verses at Winchester of her sons which wd have done honour to the famous Mr. Gray. Indeed they are in the highest spirit of Poetry. Dr. Warton is to send me a copy of them. They are in praise of Spenser, Shakespear, and Milton. If I had not been ill, I shd have desired to see the Poet.

Dr. Warton was a great critic but a very bad headmaster, and Winchester under his rule has been described as "Slackness tempered by rebellion." If this letter is correctly dated, the young poet who receives such extravagant praise cannot have been the future Bowdleriser of Shakespeare, who was then beyond school days; nor can Mr. Hardy, who kindly searched the School records for me, identify the boy.

Later on the headmaster and his wife paid a visit to Sandleford.

From Joseph Warton

I beg the favour of you to do me the Honour of accepting my Essay on Pope; a new Edition of which is just now printed, with some Corrections and some Additions. I have also taken the liberty of inclosing two Copies of my Son's Compositions, one in Latin the other in English. He will I am sure look on your Approbation, as a higher Honour than the Prize which he was so fortunate as lately to obtain. I sincerely hope you did not suffer from your journey to Winchester, nor from the long and too fatiguing a Walk which We took in the middle of the day.

My Wife begs leave to join with me, as well as my Brother, in our best Compliments to yourself, to Mr. Montagu and to Miss Gregory.

Mrs. Montagu adds, in recording this visit:

I believe I could have prevaild with them to have staid longer with us if the school holydays had not expired yesterday. As it is more blessed to give than to receive, it should be more pleasant to teach than to learn, yet I could not help pitying a Man of the Doctors age returning to his laborious task as [much as] the boys who are returning to grammar and birch. . . .

The first half of September was spent in a visit to Lord Harcourt and Lord and Lady Nuneham at Nuneham, whose generous benevolence and tender attentions to their tenantry are greatly eulogised:

I believe I wrote you word that my visit to Nuneham commenced a few weeks sooner than it would otherwise have done on account of the Lords and Lady of the Mansion having been so good as to ask me to meet the french Ambassador and his Lady here. They were engaged to come on saturday but the Spanish Ambassador having received leave from his Court to go to Valencia, to try the effect of his native air, Mr. de Noailles stays in Town to give the family whatever assistance friendship can supply in the embaras of an approaching journey. I am much afraid Monsr de Masseran is too far gone to receive benefit from change of air and climate.

NUNEHAM, *Sept. the 13th.*

I have enclosed a copy of verses of Lady Nunehams which she hung on the bust of Apollo in Lord Nunehams flower garden on my arrival at Nuneham. I think they are very pretty, and I may shew them without vanity, for it is being able to make such verses, not being the subject of them, which proves a Relation to Apollo. Pray shew them to Montagu, but I dare not trust his discretion with a copy, as he might drop them out of his pocket ; and Lady Nuneham hides her talents for poetry, tho she has written many things which wd do her great honour if they were publishd.

Mrs. Montagu's restful summer at Sandleford had evidently done much to recuperate her after the exhausting activities of the previous year, and the following shows her in such excellent fettle as even to indulge a little gentle chaff with her devoted but sometimes lugubrious friend at Deal :

Monsr and Madme de Noailles are expected here on saturday ; I suppose they will depart on monday. I propose to call at our amiable Burkes that night in my way to London where I shall pass a few days, and then return again to Sandleford, and there I shall remain till the frowns of rugged November drive me to take refuge in the deceitful smiles of Society. Thus do we divide life between avoiding real evil and pursuing fallacious good, but the one keeps one employd, and the other amused, and there is not a happier fool in this foolish World than your humble Servant ; yet I am not such an admirer of our mental state, as to grieve, that an old Woman did not through eternity make ptisans and plaisters ; as yr Ladyship seems to have done, when you wept for the departed Madam Bountiful. I trust there is a World where virtue will be more bless'd, and benevolence more gratified, than it is in this. As Angels never break their shins, I suppose you thought the good Lady wd be at a loss how to employ herself in Heaven. As I did not ever enjoy her society, and so cannot miss her here below, give me leave to rejoyce she is now better and safer than even if she was laid up in lavender.

The following extracts must serve to complete the record of the Nuneham visit :

I saunterd all the morning in the Garden or Park, and in the evening I sat down to Commerce, merely, as you may guess, from a spirit of conformity, for I think the game has neither the dexterity of push pin, nor the vivacity of tossing up. Sometimes weary of a tedious life in a long pool, I was felo de se.

On Monday we went with Mr. and Madme de Noailles to Oxford, where we saw the Primates new Building, which is perfectly noble, elegant, and simple, and deserves to have his name inscribed on it. On Tuesday afternoon, according to a long engagement I went to Mr. Burkes, lay there, and arrived in Town on Wednesday afternoon. I dined yesterday at Mr. de Noailles, and did not return home till late.

Madame de Noailles is a very sensible amiable woman, has the finest eyes I ever saw, and the most agreeable physionomy.

The Oxford building was the Canterbury Quadrangle, which Mrs. Montagu's cousin had rebuilt at a cost of £4000.

Mrs. Vesey thank God got well to Lucan, and with the glory of having saved the lives of Ld Inchiquen Mr. Vesey Mrs. Hancock as well as her own life by her undaunted courage and presence of mind. In short, impatient to land they got into a boat at low water, it struck on an Anchor, Admiral Vesey hoisted the White flag of her pocket handkerchief, and scream'd drowning, drowning; these signals brought a boat to their assistance, which they had no sooner enterd than their own sunk. One cannot think of their situation without horror. The first news of the disaster arrived to me by Mrs. Veseys hand, so I had only a frightful retrospect. If I had known of their danger I shd not have thought the resource of Mrs. Veseys courage at all adequate to the occasion.

Nuneham Courtney was evidently an early example of the model village:

Lord Harcourt built a very pretty Village; the Cottages are comfortable and convenient and there is a pretty garden allotted to every House. Lord and Lady Nuneham are the Tutelar Angels of the place. I think I never saw so many happy people as the Inhabitants of the Village; there is neither poverty nor vice there. Ten sheets of paper wd not contain all the regulations they have made; amongst others, for your hint, every Villager puts in a penny pr week as a fund for time of distress, Lord Nuneham doubles it, and there is now a large fund. They make a feast every summer, and bestow prizes on the Persons distinguishd for spinning or rural labours. There is a school under excellent regulations. The Cottages are so neat, have such store of excellent bacon, and garden stuff to eat with it, I think I could lodge and board there very comfortably.

On her return to Hill Street Mrs. Montagu called on her vivacious old father, whom she found very well and very good-humoured, though " He said he was afraid he had the Hyp sometimes. I advised him to seek out amusements and to get some company about him. I shall get him to go with me to see Mr. Lever's birds one day." Sir Ashton Lever's great museum of birds, shells, fossils, savage costumes, weapons, etc., had been removed to London three years previously, but from contemporary descriptions it seems doubtful whether its dubious treasures would have done much to cure Mr. Robinson's Hyp.

On September 18, only a few days after her return from Nuneham, Mrs. Montagu writes to tell Mrs. Carter of the catastrophe which had just occurred there :

I was going to the French Ambassador this evening, but the ill news of Ld Harcourts sad disaster prevented me, for I had not spirits to stir. His Lordships favorite Dog fell into a Well in the yard of a Brickmaker, and Lord Harcourt endeavouring to save the Dog fell in and was drowned. It is but a few, very few days since I thought him the happiest Man of his age of any I knew. He did the honours of his magnificent and beautiful place with the greatest chearfulness and politeness. On monday Lady Nuneham wrote to me in great spirits ; on tuesday afternoon all was dismay and sadness. I sent this moment to Harcourt House ; the Servants were in such grief they cd hardly speak. Ld and Lady Nuneham are in the deepest affliction. I never saw any Person so careful not to give any trouble or embaras ; he was a most kind Master and I believe never said an illnatured or even unpolite thing to the very Grooms in his Stable ; his good nature extended in too great a degree to the brute creation. he had a most prodigious love for dogs, and especially for the little favorite for whom he lost his life. The Well was made for the use of the Brick makers when he built his House ; it was almost coverd with grass and weeds and it is supposed the little dog had got into one supposing he cd walk over, and that his Lordship stooping to take him out fell head long, for he had pulld off his right glove and laid down his hat ; had the Well been full of water only he had probably got out, but his head stuck in the mud at bottom, upon which there was about 8 foot of water.

Walpole speaks sneeringly of Mrs. Montagu's "high flown panegyric on Lord Harcourt, who had not an idea" ; but there is nothing of the sort here.

Mrs. Montagu lost this autumn her brother Morris, who died whilst on a visit to their cousin the Archbishop, and was buried in Armagh Cathedral. Morris had managed the Duke of Montagu's estates, and his sister applied to the Duke that the office might devolve on her brother Charles, the Recorder of Canterbury. The Duke's reply, however, explained that Morris had left a letter to him recommending his assistant agent for the post, which he proposed to confer on him. In this letter the Duke speaks very warmly of good Mr. Montagu, whom he loved and honoured, and through whom he had first become intimately acquainted with Morris.

From La Marquise du Deffand

PARIS, *le* 16 *9bre* 1777.

Pourrez vous croire, madame, que la charmante lettre que vous avez pris la peine de m'écrire dattée du 10 de may, ne m'a eté rendûe qu'hier 15 9bre, elle m'a eté apporté par Mr. Boutin qui s'excusa de ce long retardement par des Voyages continuels qu'il a fait depuis son retour d'angleterre.

Je lus votre lettre en sa presence, il fut temoins de mon plaisir et de ma reconnoissance. rien ne m'a plus surpris que l'annonce d'un present. Vous en voulez faire Un langage, mais quelque charmant qu'il puisse etre, on preferera toujours de vous entendre et de vous lire a tous les hyeroglifes les plus ingenieux et les plus admirables. ce n'est pas Seulement par oui dire, Madame, que je vous parle de Votre Eloquence, Votre lettre suffiroit pour me la faire connoitre ; independament de tout ce que J'en avois oui dire, Je viens de lire Vos trois dialogues que Mad. de Meyniere a traduit et qu'elle m'a envoyée. J'ay lû aussi Votre appologie de Shakespear,—Je ne doûte pas que Voltaire ne reste sans replique ; Je vous dirois tout ce que j'en pense si mon approbation et mes louanges étoient digne de Vous. mais Madame, Vous avez dût déméler bien promptement que je n'ay ni talent ni scavoir, mais Je ne renonçe pas a prétendre à avoir quelque goût, Je suis trop touchee de Votre mérite pour avoir cette fausse modestie.

Quand j'auray recû ces cassolettes qui seront pour moi Un monument tres glorieux, Vous voudrez bien que J'aye l'honneur de Vous renouveller mes remerciemens ; elles courent le monde, elles sont a present a Ostende, il faut qu'elles arrivent a Roüen, et que de la elles remontent la rivierre jusqu'a Paris, il se passera peutetre plus d'un mois avant qu'elles y arrivent, Je les attend avec l'impatience qu'on doit necessairement avoir pour jouir des marques de bonté d'une personne aussi illustre que vous.

Daignez recevoir madame les assurances de tous les Sentimens avec lesquels Je vous suis tres respectueusement attaché et avec lesquels J'ay l'honneur d'etre Votre tres humble et tres obbeyssante Servante

La M. du Deffand.

This letter is presumably dictated to the faithful Wiart, who must be held responsible for its paucity of accentuation.

The allusion to the Shakespeare Essay and Voltaire is deliciously non-committal.

Mr., afterwards Sir Nathaniel, Wraxall now joined the ranks of Mrs. Montagu's correspondents with a lengthy journal of foreign travel sent from Vienna, from which a few extracts follow. His *Historical Memoirs* of this period evoked a storm of criticism, but are full of interest. He devotes several pages to an account of Mrs. Montagu,—whom he dubs "the Madame du Deffand of the English capital,"—Mrs.

Vesey, Mrs. Chapone, Mrs. Boscawen and others of the Blue Stockings, whose coteries he thinks lost their mainstay with Johnson's death. The Doctor, despite his brutalities, enjoyed the cult of the ladies, and he recalls the lovely Duchess of Devonshire "hanging on the sentences that fell from his lips."

From N. Wraxall

VIENNA, *Wednesday, the 10th December.*

. . . To render Description interesting, it must be minute ; and I have seen too many Objects in Flanders, Holland, the Empire, Russia, Saxony and Bohemia, to comprise even a faint Outline of them within the Bounds my Paper prescribes to me. If I knew where to fix, or what particular subject to select from the rest, I might hope to fix your attention. Mine has been chiefly directed towards His Prussian Majesty, whom I had some little Opportunity of seeing and studying during about Seven Weeks which I passed in Berlin or Potzdam. Tho' declined in his bodily Powers, his unconquerable Mind, and astonishing assemblage of Talents render him the first Object of political Survey, Admiration, and Terror in the European World. I could never look upon him, but his whole wonderful Reign rose before my Imagination. His amazing Achievements, and unwearied Policy—the Battles he has fought—the Enemies against whom he has sustained Himself—the Pitch of Glory and Aggrandizement to which He has raised the House of Brandenbourg—the gloomy Retirement in which He passes his Time at Potzdam or Sans Souci and from which He awes the whole North of Europe—All this Combination of Circumstances cannot fail to impress the Mind, and make one interest oneself in his minutest actions. Some Remarks on Dantzic and the Polish Partition prevented me from having the Honour of being presented to him—a Circumstance however which gave me little Subject of Regret, as the Protection and Friendship of Prince Frederic of Brunswic his Nephew, afforded me several Opportunities of seeing him still more minutely than I should have done in the Drawing Room.—

When I mention Brunswic, Gratitude does not permit me to omit some mention of the Reigning Duchess, to whose Graciousness and Politeness I shall ever be under the deepest

Obligations. I think you would have admired and liked her. I passed a few days most agreably in her Court. She is a Sister of the King of Prussia, and inherits all the Fire and Spirit which so eminently distinguishes the Brandenbourg Family. Her Person is little, her Face pale and meagre, without the least remain of Beauty—yet thro' these Disadvantages there is an Air of Distinction, which appeared to be the Result I thought, rather of Dignity of Mind, than Elevation of Station. Her Conversation was animated, spirituelle and interesting. She betrayed, without intending to display, an Extent and Universality of Knowledge which astonished me. She did me the honour to inform me of several curious and concealed Anecdotes respecting her Ancestors, peculiarly of the late Queen of Russia her Mother Daughter to George the First, and of Sophie Charlotte Wife to Frederic the First King of Prussia, her Grandmother, who was likewise of the same Family. The Duchess piqued Herself on being descended from the English Kings. She shewed me an invaluable Miniature of Mary Queen of Scots, which had been handed down from the Electress Palatine, Queen of Bohemia, and had been presented to Her by her Mother. It was done in France when She was the Wife of Francis the Second. I never saw so beautiful a Head, nor any which gave me so high an Idea of Mary's charms. . . .

. . . I left Dresden the 24th of November, and crossed the Mountains which divide Saxony from Bohemia, with the greatest Difficulty, among Precipices which overhang the Elbe, and thro' continual Snows. I found Lady Wortley Montagu's Description, tho' written 60 Years ago, literally verified. You may perhaps recollect her Account of the Rocks along which She passed, and the Danger She escaped. We arrived at Prague in two Days from Dresden, but on account of the advanced Season, and as We shall visit it again next May, We only stayed one Day in that City. . . . We continued our Route thro' Bohemia over Fields of Battle, 'till we arrived at Iglau in Moravia, a considerable Town. We passed thro' all Moravia and Lower Austria to this City, at the Gates of which I arrived last Sunday Sennight, not a little fatigued with fifty eight Hours Travel, thro' very bad Roads, and almost continual Snow.—I have been here too short a Time to give you any Idea of Vienna. I presented the Letter You was so obliging as to honour me with to Sir Robert Keith, immediately on my Arrival. He presented me last Sunday

> to the Emperor, and afterwards to the Empress. They have distinct and separate Courts. The Arch-Duke and Arch-Duchess of Milan are here at this time likewise, and We expect a gay Carnival. The Winter is setting in very severely, and they say that in a few Days the Danube will be froze over; I mean the Branches—for the Main Stream is too large and rapid to yield so soon to the Frost. . . .

The year may be closed with a political summary, dated December 14, to Mrs. Carter:

> Mrs. Howe bears about her all the solicitudes and anxieties a great mind is capable of; some alarms for her Brothers safety, more for his glory. I pittied her, but threw a great deal of admiration and respect into my pity, else it wd not have been worthy of her acceptance. She is impatient to hear he has taken some forts and an Island, and wishes an opportunity wd offer that he might be at Washington. The opposition is desirous one should believe that Ld North and the rest of the Ministers will resign. I am strangely perverse, and from their intimations that they will do so am rather convinced they will not. The moment the Court treats with them they will be concealing their negotiations there. Politicians declarations, like witches prayers, must be read backwards, That is the truth which they do not tell. Ld Chathams scalping knives were two edged weapons, and cut deep the Orator who flourishd them. His account of the Navy was refuted. He is gone I believe to Hayes again where he will have the gout and no more assist his Party, if Ld Shelburne and Ld Camden can be calld a party; and they may be calld so, if weight can be reckond as tale in these matters. My Friend Burke, who lookd like a jolly Farmer at Beconsfield in harvest time is now as meager as possible.

Burke's purchase of Gregories, the estate near Beaconsfield, has furnished his detractors with a handle for much suspicious innuendo as to how he obtained the £23,000 which it cost him. Part came, doubtless, from William and Richard Burke, more from his patron Lord Rockingham, and the remainder from the ultimate sale of his Irish estate. But a statesman of such passionate convictions as Burke could not expect to preserve an unslandered reputation.

1778

BERENGER, VOLTAIRE, GLORIANA, MRS. VESEY— THE DEATH OF CHATHAM

American affairs. Lord Shelburne's engagement. David Garrick acts at Hill Street. Hannah More's *Percy*. Overtures for peace. Richard Berenger's debts. American Commissioners. Lord Chatham's last speech. State Papers. Mr. Le Texier. A performance at Newbury. Death of Lord Chatham. His estate and creditors. Death of Voltaire. Journey to Denton. Leonard Smelt and the King. Lord Kames at Denton. Mr. Robinson's death. James Woodhouse. Beauties at Tunbridge. Duchess of Devonshire. Return to town. Mrs. Vesey's assemblies. Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale. The Crofts. The new house. The Court. Keppel and Palliser. Mrs. Macaulay. Lady Carmarthen.

Some extracts from Mrs. Montagu's February budgets to Mrs. Vesey in Ireland will best record her early doings and hearings of this year :

The rumours of War grow more faint every day. It is said Genl Howe has orders to offer condition of reconciliation to Washington, and that our Troops are orderd to return from America. It is now supposed that neither Lord C: nor Mr. Edens little Son will go to the Congress, nor yet Mrs. Eden, tho she had orderd many fine Sacks and high plumed caps for the occasion. There is not at present any talk of Ld Chathams Ld Shelburnes and Ld Camdens coming into power. Our present Ministers think I believe, that if we make Peace with the Americans, and do not make War with the French, they can keep their places. . . .

Lord and Lady Mahone, Lady Hester Pitt, Dr. Robertson the Garricks and Burkes are to dine with me on thursday. Mr. Garrick is in great health this winter. You will be glad our friend Mr. Erskine is made a Commissioner of Bankrupts.

I am very sorry I must change my tone since my last letter; it was full of joy and congratulations on L^{d} Shelburnes intended nuptials, the silly girl after having seemd much pleased with the offer of his heart and a great joynture and pin money and a coronet (for the Hymen of now a days lights his torch at various fires) all of a sudden wept and pouted, and desired to be excused. The levity of her conduct on this occasion is surprising to every one, and no doubt but it was vexatious to Lord Shelburne, however there are ladies as young and as fair who will readily repair the loss. I wish he had no worse affliction, but his youngest son, alas! was very suddenly attacked by a disorder in his bowels which ended fatally.

I know you will be glad to hear my health has stood firm in all changes of weather; on Saturday last the French Ambassador and Ambassadress, L^{d} and Lady Spencer and the Garricks dined with me, and Mr. Garrick was so good as to act the Dagger scene in Macbeth, and King Lear on his knees uttering maledictions on his ungratefull daughters. I need not tell you how much he surprized and delighted their Excellencies and three other of their countrymen.

Mrs. Hannah Mores Tragedy of Percy has run fifteen nights and is still going on. Mr. Cumberlands Battle of Hastings is acted with great applause. Our friend Mrs. Carter is very well. The town was very empty till the birthday. I have not seen the Lucan family since Miss Molesworths change of sentiment. No one pretends to guess the reason of her behaviour, she appeard much pleased with the offer. My little man is at Harrow persuing the Muses. There is a Translation of Aeschylus by Mr. Potter which the learned commend very much as a just translation, I think it is a valuable addition to english litterature. If you read it you will see how much Milton owes to Aeschylus, and you will find a great resemblance between the Prometheus and Satan. Mr. Potter in his preface has done great honour to my essay on Shakespear. The apprehensions of a war with France seem over, and there is hope the Americans and we may be reconciled. I am to dine to-day at Mr. Pepys; his bride and he seem very happy. Mr. and Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson dined with me on Thursday, but I do not relish my dinners now my Vesey is not a guest.

I could tell you a story of imaginary daggers, but tho the daggers were sharp my style will be blunt. I never could be poetical in this Town, if my imagination was preparing to rise on the wings of the Eagle in that moment perhaps a wretch under the window cryd oysters, and I have been immediately awakend from the vision. This is the very hour of night in which they cry bolognia Sausages about the streets; my letter shall suit the times, and it shall be stuffed with diverse common vulgar things not delicate, nor yet unsavoured, in short such as shall please any palate not too nice for the sauceage; Politicks shall season the one as allspice the other.

Strange things have happend this week, The Ministers are gone over to the American side; oft have I known the Opposition go over to the Ministry, never before did I know the Ministers go over to the opposition. . . . It is said the Bedford House party do not like the making overtures of peace. The Chancellor, it is said is angry that he was not let into the secret of this peace making; it is thought he will resign.

Miss M: has acted very strangely in regard to our Friend; I see you think my Lord North might make that up too, but tho I suppose his Lordship has great talents for conciliation, yet I think it wd even be too much for him, so we must consign the Miss to some newer lover. She is a pretty insipid Miss, and I trust our Friend will not break his heart, as there are many such Misses who will be ready to repair his loss. . . . Tomorrow all the representatives of all Kings and States are to dine wth me, and also a Count Shullenberg and his Lady; he is nephew to Lady Chesterfield; Ld and Lady Mahon, Lord Pitt, Lady Mary Cooke are all the English that I have askd.

The Duchess of Beaufort calld this morn: Lady Granby has brought a fine boy; she is very well. Sr W. Howe is coming home. I had the pleasure of meeting the amiable Lady Louisa Conolly at Mr. de Noailles on Wednesday, we talkd much of you; yr cheek wd burn, and you wd blame the fire and call for a screen. Mr. Burke made a speech the other day in the House which was a chef d'œuvre. I hear it will be printed. He was to have dined with me on saturday but had business which calld him to Beconsfield. Ld Chatham has the gout; whether he will come to assist the Ministry in making a peace is more than I can tell you. Mr. Pulteney has written an excellent pamphlet on these American contests.

Lord Shelburne consoled himself, as anticipated, for Miss Molesworth's defection by marrying, in the following summer, Lady Louisa Fitzpatrick, sister-in-law of Horace Walpole's correspondent, the Countess of Upper Ossory.

Richard Berenger, the subject of the next letter, and the author of a fine book on Horsemanship, and of a much-quoted poem on Shakespeare's birthday, was one of the most charming and popular figures in the society of his time. Hannah More described him as "everybody's favourite, all chivalry and blank verse and anecdote," and Johnson spoke of him as the "standard of true eloquence." But Berenger had latterly fallen upon evil days and straitened circumstances, and had for some time been obliged to confine himself to his official residence in the King's Mews (he was Gentleman of the Horse to His Majesty), an abode happily privileged against bailiffs. His friends, who were many, determined to make an effort to release him from his obligations. David Garrick—whom Johnson and others stigmatised with the brand of meanness,—returned securities of £500, and added his own donation of £300. Thomas Pitt, Lord Chatham's nephew, came forward generously, as the following letter shows, and a composition with Berenger's creditors was effected.

From Thos. Pitt

OXFORD STREET, *March 9th.*

I dare say you are no Stranger to the Malady which has so long confined our poor friend Berenger to his House; and your known feeling for your friends will not suffer me to let you be ignorant that an effort is now making for his recovery. If it succeeds he may yet enjoy the remainder of his Life with some degree of comfort; if not, he must resign himself to his Fate, and trust to be released in a short time by the best friend to the afflicted. I have reason to hope that his nearest relations will not fail to contribute largely, but as the amount of his Debts is considerable, not less than £2600 (a Sum as much beyond his abilities as the Debt of the Nation) it will require the joint assistance of all who wish him well to extricate him from his Distress. I have myself subscribed £500 and have the satisfaction to find several persons who have offer'd upon this occasion their £50 and £100—so that I do not despair of being able to complete the Sum with the aid of his Friends and Relations. The particulars of all the demands upon him have been deliver'd in to Col Cowper who has generously undertaken the trouble of settling his affairs with his Creditors, if *the whole* of the money can be raised to set him free, otherwise he will return the several Sums to the Subscribers, as it would answer no purpose unless the business can be done effectualy. He could not take the Liberty of waiting upon you without your permission, but if you will give him leave he will explain to you the plan we have adopted, and the prospect we have of Success in it.

From her Sister

Fitzpatrick reports that when the notification of Commissioners being intended, to set out for America with conciliatory proposals, our officers there were exceedingly enraged, tore the Cockades out of their hats, etc., at receiving only paper when they expected Soldiers to arrive to reinforce their diminished Army. I have no faith in the threatened Invasions, an attempt woud be extreamly dangerous to those that shoud undertake it ; our expectation of it will give the french every advantage they can wish. Our fleet is all turnd into Guarda Costas. Should the french land, the K. . . . is to put himself at the head of the troops, it would indeed be strange were he not to do it, but if he never gets on horseback till then I fancy he may be a pedestrian all his life. It is lucky this is not the season for great consumption of coals, otherwise the embargo on all the shipping, and the prohibition of clearing out any coal vessels for six weeks to come woud have a chilly sound.

Very practical politics for a coalowner !

What w^{d} have been said by the said farthing post to L^{d} C . . . l's being appointed a commissioner to treat with the Americans I do not know, and I confess it is a measure which strikes me dumb, so I can not say anything upon it. His Lordship finding no doubt in himself those qualities which render a man fit to strike awe into stern Republicans went to the —— and offerd his services, which were accepted, a Mr. Storer commonly called Bonton Storer was appointed secretary. However it is said that the Peer finding the publick differing so widely in opinion of the fitness of his Lordship for this business begins to shrink from it. I suspect he was accepted only to keep off the importunity of more stern Candidates, and give time for a proper nomination. It is thought that the Bedfordians are ill pleased with the Ministers conciliatory plan but most aggrieved are the gentlemen in opposition, and indeed I do think it is very hard that they should get the measures, which they cared little for, and lose the dear object, the places. I never knew such a trick play'd before, and if it did not make our enemies laugh and our friends blush one could be diverted at this legere de main, but indeed the matter is too important for a jest. There are rumours of a French War but I believe it will not be declared before next Wednesday as I am that day to dine at Mr. de Noailles.

Those who recall certain of our published London Diaries and doings during critical periods of 1914–18 will not be surprised at the levity of Mrs. Montagu's reference to her dinner with the French Ambassador at this most anxious moment of Britain's danger and isolation. The American Commissioners appointed were Lord Carlisle, William Eden, and George Johnstone, formerly Governor of Florida.

Anthony Morris Storer, collector and social celebrity, was an Eton and Cambridge friend of Lord Carlisle's and accompanied him to America as Secretary on this fruitless Commission.

The following is Mrs. Montagu's report to Mrs. Vesey of Chatham's last speech:

[*April* 10*th* ?].

I must give you an account of Lord Chathams appearance at the House of Lords on tuesday, and his indisposition. His Lordship was recovering from a fit of the gout, but tho the distemper was retiring, strength was not return'd; however the present critical state of things would not allow a Statesman and a Patriot to slumber on his Pillow. It was declared he wd come to the House of Lords. He appear'd there. The

Thunder of his eloquence was abated, the lightening of his eye was dimmed, but experience gave weight to all he said, and the glory of his days of administration threw a lustre around him. Every eye was fixd on him, every ear attentive to him. The D: of Richmond had made a motion, that the Commissioners should have power to declare America independent, and gave for reason, the sad condition of this Country. Submission and dejection never fashioned the counsels of the Great Man. The energy of his mind imparted force enough to his body to enable him to rise. He said, he rejoyced that the Grave had spared him to this time, that he might declare himself against the granting independence to America, and then he went on reprobating what had been said of the weakness and inability of this Country. In all the pomp of Oratory, with all the lustre of eloquence he set forth the former triumphs of our arms, and the past glories of the Brunswic line; the news papers will give you the speech more at large. The D: of Richmond answerd his Lordship, Lord Chatham rose to reply, the Genius of Brittain seemd to heave in his bosom the Senate was attentive to catch its Oracle; but the sentiments were too great for utterance, the subject too important, too august for words; he fell into a convulsion fit; he continued in the fit, and the House in consternation, for half an hour; His eldest and second Son and Lord Mahone in speechless agony stood by him. Ld Lyttelton with great presence of mind went to Dr. Addington immediately on the accident; he used every means to recover the Patient, and he brought him back from the immeasurable distance of the inanimate being to the Earl of Chatham. he was very sick at the stomach for about two hours, and the Doctor did not think it safe to carry him to Lord Mahones, where he had taken up his abode, as the situation was remote, but removed him to Mr. Strutts house adjacent. This morning being still better he is gone to Downing Street. Humanly speaking (as the phrase is) I wish and hope his recovery, but how great! how glorious! how marvellous! or, to say all in one, how Chatham wd be his Exit! Then might be applied the words of Pope

Such in those moments, as in all the past,
Oh save my Country Heav'n wd be his last.

I have always admired the close of this great Orators Periods, but surely death wd be the most emphatick! and of all figures in rhetorick a convulsion at such a time seems the finest. For the sake of the publick at this juncture I wish him to recover, as in dire necessities I wd turn the Victors wreath, the Conquerors lawrel, into a broom, but by my troth tis pity: If he lives he may sweep away some of our dirt and disgrace, but no addition will be made to his glory, for we are become a scoundrel Nation, worthy to be scorned, and fit to be cudgell'd. . . . The account of Ld Chatham I had from his family, so you may depend on the truth of it.

Mrs. Vesey, who had been hearing Chatham's last speech read aloud by Colonel Burton just before Mrs. Montagu's letter arrived, burst into a rhapsody of eulogy:

I believe in my conscience Ariel slipt the pencil of Raphael into your hand and placed your feather in his own cap. I see the expiring Patriot surrounded by speechless children, drooping friends, the consternation of an assembly once the most august the world ever saw. Heaven restore it to its former lustre . . . had it not been that he was your friend, and that I had been in love with him myself at fifteen, I should have wishd the Curtain shoud then have dropt and the great mind rushd out of the body in its exertion for national honour. . . . Shall we see the resurrection of a Chatham again? England once rose to a pitch of glory when all the world desponded. I am afraid the pis aller, which is a part nobody woud take if they coud help it, will be our fate, and that bright Chatham blaze was only a meteor from an imagination of fire. I have adored England with such an enthusiasm I can think of nothing else, so don't charge me with romance or if you do forgive it.

If Mr. Vesey had not been waiting to take her note to post on his way to a Turk's Head Society dinner there would have been much more to be said. Men are so impatient of enthusiasms at dinner-time.

Part of a letter written to Mrs. Vesey on April 29 contains references to some minor current events.

I supposed you and Mr. Vesey would like to have the State papers lately publishd by Ld Hardwicke, so I orderd Mrs. Denoyer to send them to Mr. Perry, who promised to convey them to you. When the present state of things is unpleasing it is desirable to avert the mind from it to the tale of other times. There is a very fine translation of the Tragedies of Eschylus just publishd, but I did not know whether your delicacy wd not be hurt with the snoring of the Furies, and the very antique cast of the Dramas. Mr. Warton has given a second Vol of the Ancient Poetry, but not knowing whether you loved the old Poets and old language I did not order it to be sent ; to me, it is very entertaining. . . . Lady Craven Lady Granard and Mr. le Texier calld on me the day before yesterday ; they talk of acting a translation of le Sonambule at the Mansion House at Newbury. Le Texier is to be the Dutch Gardiner, he will naturally speak broken English. Lady Craven who is Poetical is to write a prologue and epilogue. Lady Corke and the oriental Mr. Jones, who are both at Mr. Poyntz's in this neighbourhood made me a visit yesterday, they were just come from London, but brought no news.

Of Mons. Le Texier, who is mentioned in several letters of this period, information seems scanty. He is not mentioned in *Larousse* or *La Grande Encyclopédie* or half-a-dozen other French books of biographical reference, but from some notes in a thin volume of French plays which I found in the British Museum I gather that, after immense success in Paris as a dramatic reader and reciter, he got into trouble from various imprudence, and was expelled from France. Madame du Deffand had written more than one enthusiastic letter to Horace Walpole about his recitals, and protested: "Soyez sûr que lui tout seul est la meilleure troupe que nous avons." Voltaire avowed that "ses petites comédies m'auraient fait mourir de rire—si je ne mourais pas de colique." On his expulsion he came to London, and he appears to have remained in England till about 1805, when, after a tour in Germany and other countries, he was finally at liberty to return to Paris in 1814, where he died at an advanced age.

During his stay in London, Hookham published for him eight volumes of the *Pièces de Théâtre* which were his favourite recitals, including Rousseau's "Pygmalion," Mercier's "L'Indigent," and "Le Ton de Paris" which the Duc de Biron (Lauzun) had written and presented to him, and which met with astonishing success.

To her Sister

Sandleford, *May 17th.*

We went to the play on monday night. Lady Craven acted very well and we had a prologue and epilogue of her writing; they were lively and pretty, but the best of our Entertainmt was an Opera Comique acted and sung by her Ladyship, Mr. le Texier, and a french man he brought for the purpose. Lady Craven sings and acts admirably, and looks so pretty and has so much french vivacity I am sure all Paris wd be mad after her, if instead of an English Peeress she was turnd into a french Opera Girl. I was so disorderd by the heat of the play House on monday night, that I was obliged to stay at home and take saline draughts on tuesday. A great fat Parson who sat on the bench behind me added to the heat I sufferd; he had an oaken stick in his hand with which he now and then gave me a punch on the shoulder, without any malice; but I am not very fond of these mixd crouds where want of better knowledge makes people more troublesome than the most illnatured well bred persons are. On Monday night all the Neighbouring Ladies were at the Play, on Tuesday few but the Newbury people.

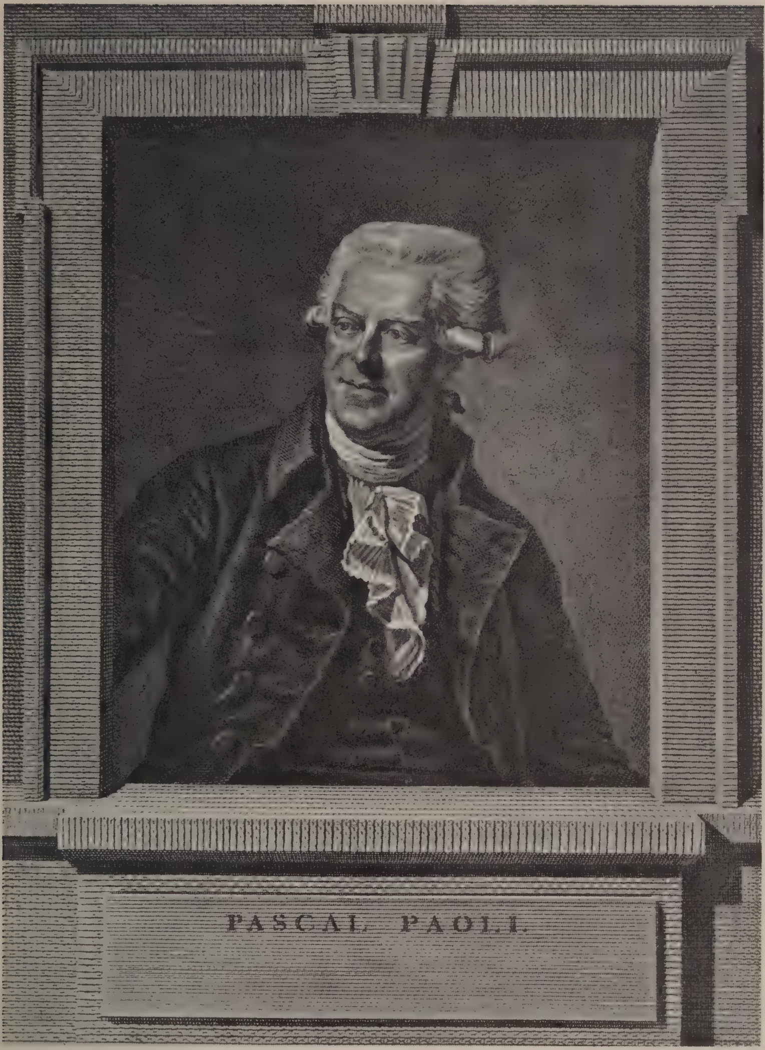
The illness and death of Lord Chatham naturally occupy chief space in the letters of May:

His death at this time is a misfortune to the publick, as he was feard by our Enemies who seem now to have no grounds of fear, if our fleet is to continue at Portsmouth. Some say there is a want of Beer. Indeed it ill becomes the first Lord of the Admiralty to throw cold water on our Naval expeditions. As to our ships they are many, and never Fleet I am told by some of the opposition, made so noble an appearance, but if they are not perfectly equipped for Service that will avail little. I have a great opinion of Lord Sandwiches abilities, and of his alertness, which enclines me to doubt whether the fault is in him. I wish our young Captains may resemble Hawke, Brett and Saunders and Boscawen, and then we may defy the House of Bourbon.

And again :

> I am glad there seems a disposition in the Publick to shew respect to his memory and family but when I read in the news papers, that Mr. Rigby had moved for erecting a monument to him, I could not help repeating to myself, the lines Corneille makes Cornelia speak, when she is told Caesar wept at the news of Pompeys death.
>
> Ah qu'il est doux de plaindre
> un illustre enemie quand il n'est plus a craindre.
>
> Plutarch says all the acts of Timoleon were set off by the Graces. Those Graces which captivate opinion, and shed a certain dazzling lustre, certainly attended Ld Chatham to the last. The acceptance of a Pension had a little impaird the gloss of his popular character but the close of his life, dying thus as it were in a Patriot act, has revived all the colours of popularity, and given them a new lustre.

Within a few days of Mrs. Montagu's dinner at the Noailles', the ambassadors were recalled from Paris and London ; England and France were at war, and the whole aspect of affairs was changed fundamentally. Our troops were locked up in Philadelphia and New York, or imprisoned at Saratoga. Our navy was by no means prepared for immediate action. The likelihood of Spain joining France against us amounted almost to a certainty. We had not an ally in the world. The conciliation proposals of our Commissioners were flouted by the Americans, whom nothing short of independence would now satisfy, whilst the feeling at home was strong that the severance of the colonies meant the downfall of England. In this crisis of her fate the country had turned instinctively to her one great leader for guidance and a trumpet call. And Chatham had spoken, had admitted that America could never be overcome by force, had repeated with passion his defiant protest against the dismemberment of our ancient and most noble monarchy—and then had been carried home to die.


PASCAL PAOLI.

PASCAL PAOLI
After Drelling

Without a glorious War is succeeded by a frugal administration in time of Peace, no lasting benefit will accrue from it. By taking Canada we have lost America, and our sad situation with the Americans and our vast debt make the French insult us. It will be said if Ld Chatham had been Minister they would not have done so, and I heartily wish he had been Minister, but alas ! is a Country a gainer by an expensive War which has done no service but that of establishing the reputation of one of its Citizens ? . . . We want to keep the Americans a dependant State. Is that to be done by the eloquence of our Commissioners ? or by our Fleet which is to watch the motions of the French ? I do not see that the means we take ever tend to the end we desire. . . .

As to Lord Chathams spending the Pynsent Estate it is more excusable, it was given him merely out of regard to his personal merit. The 30000L he got by renewing the Commissions at the death of the late King would certainly have been better saved for his family, but it was his own acquiring, not an inheritance. His selling the annuity settled on his Wife and Son by the publick I cannot defend. However when other Men who aimed at Popularity spent great sums, the Roman history tells us they did it to debauch the people ; of this Ld Chatham is perfectly free, every shilling was spent in domestick expence and personal indulgence, nothing in publick munificence, nothing to private followers and Creatures ; it was in Coaches and Servants, a splendid train and a great Household. The Publick must pay the first grant of 3000L a year and now a second of 4000, for his creditors will receive the first during Lady Chathams life, so in the whole he gets 2000L a year more than the Duke of Marlbro' had for his Victories, and indeed the Publick has given his son more than it gave to him. . . . I never cd understand why Ld Chathams Creditors were more the publick concern than the creditors of other Insolvent debtors. Ld Chathams Children have indeed a claim on the gratitude of the publick. It seems to me the World is run mad. I am quite of your opinion as to the danger of an Invasion. I had a letter from Ed Brown last night, in which he tells me, we make a most martial appearance in the North, and so well backd by jolly Keelmen and Pittmen, he seems to wish to have a brush with the *Mounseers*. He says Labourers are scarce, and their wages rise ; at the last article I rejoyce tho I am so great a Farmer. meat is 4½d at Newcastle but he has killd meat for my Workmen and sold at 4d without losing by it, and that puts my poor men in good humour. I am in hopes there will be one good consequence in so many fellows being taken from the plough, that those who remain will get better wages; but this has not yet appeard in this Country.

Of Voltaire's death, which occurred on May 30, Mrs. Montagu says: "It was hard to die an untimely death after the labour of living to 85. The Poets and diseurs de bons mots will rejoice, and their tiny wits may make a new point to an epigram." Voltaire had been bundled up to Paris by his exacting niece Madame Denis, and had been shaken by the death of Le Kain and the meeting with Suzanne de Livry, his love of sixty years ago. He had been present at the performance of *Irene*, in a large Louis XIV. peruque, black and unpowdered, in which his emaciated face was so buried that only his eyes could be seen, and seemed to emit sparks of fire. His reception was an extraordinary popular triumph, but it was the death of him. Determined to summon strength enough to carry the Academy to engage in the Great Dictionary, he had recourse to opium to obtain rest, but the doses which thirty years before had so rejuvenated him now proved fatal.

In July Mrs. Montagu set out for Denton, breaking her long journey at Bugden, Newark-on-Trent, and Weatherby, and spending the fourth night at Mr. Smelt's charming cottage, near North Allerton.

Through my whole journey I perceived every mark of increased prosperity; cottages, villages, towns, all improved since I passed this road three years ago. The bridges are converted from wood to stone, the fields better cultivated. In my whole journey only one beggar attended my carriage, except at North Allerton.

Mr. Smelt was not destined to occupy the new house which he had just been showing to Mrs. Montagu. Though he had resigned the tutorship of the young princes and declined a pension, the King and Queen did not feel inclined to part with him.

On Aug. 7, in a letter to Mrs. Carter, is this :

> Their Majesties have sent for Mr. and Mrs. Smelt and have told them they mean never to part with them, they have contrived an appartment for them at Windsor, and wherever the King is he will have Mr. Smelt established near him ; all this done in the most generous kind manner. Mr. Smelt is the first man who ever endeared himself to a King by his sincerity and disinterestedness ; surely this does honour to the King ! Mr. Smelt informed me of this by letter about a week after I saw him at his Cottage. His daughter Mrs. Goulton and her husband will reside at the charming house he has built.

Amongst her August visitors at Denton were Dr. Gregory and Lord Kames, the Scottish justice and author, whose *Essay on the Principles of Morality*, written against Hume, had involved him in a charge of heresy.

> The four days Lord Kaimes stayed with me I did not feel a moment's ennui. His lordship is fourscore and three years of life, of age 25. His memory now is equal to any one I ever knew, and his vivacity superior. Having a large property and being also a trustee for the improvement of the forfeited estates in Scotland he has employed much time and pains on agriculture and manufactures and all the useful arts.

To Mrs. Carter she concludes a letter from Denton on September 11 :

> But I will not enlarge on my former pleasures, or present occupations, as I am uncertain whether you are at Tunbridge or not, and therefore whether this letter will ever get to your hand ; I hope it will, for tho I know everything I have written, or shall write, will probably be delivered over to the pastry Cook when it has been once read, to have it, unread, deliverd to him, to put at the bottom of a pye, wd really be very mortifying. Mr. Boswell himself who drunk or sober is not too partial to the productions of my pen, wd not condemn them to so hard a fate till they had been *almost* half read.

This is an allusion, presumably, to Dr. Johnson's adverse criticism of Mrs. Montagu's Shakespeare Essay, which, according to Boswell, he had not read. "Reynolds is fond of her book, and I wonder at it; for neither I, nor Beauclerk, nor Mrs. Thrale could get through it." Though the *Tour to the Hebrides* was not published till 1785, Boswell himself says that "the unfavourable opinion of Mrs. Montagu's book which Dr. Johnson is here reported to have given, is known to have been that which he uniformly expressed, as many of his friends well remember." The Journal written in 1773, had been, or a considerable part of it, in Mrs. Thrale's possession several years before its publication.

Mrs. Montagu came south again in the middle of September, and went to Tunbridge Wells, as she had been suffering latterly from an internal disorder epidemic in the North. In the first week of October her father, whose health had been failing for some time past, died. Old Mr. Robinson had been in his day a very lively wit and one of the most popular figures of London coffee-house life. The Mount Morris estate at Horton, Kent, of which his wife had had a life interest, had passed to her eldest son, Mrs. Montagu's brother Matthew, who gave the name of Horton Park to the old Priory previously known as Monks Horton; but Mr. Robinson had saved some money, "which is happy, as the rank of his eldest grandson is one day to be raised."

There is in the National Portrait Gallery a conversation piece painted by Gawen Hamilton in 1735 of an Artists' Club, of which Matthew Robinson, pencil in hand and pointing to a drawing held by Dahl, is the central and most distinguished figure; and it is of interest to note, as Mr. Paul de Castro pointed out to me, that old Mr. Robinson's figure, pose, and gesture in this painting are exactly identical with those of the painting of him and his wife which is at Farnham Royal, and is attributed to "W. Hamilton," but more probably by the same artist who did the group at the Tiptop St. Luke's Club, and of whom Mrs. Finberg has written an interesting little monograph.

Brayley says of Mr. Robinson:

> He was a gentleman of a most independent spirit and very lively parts, though from a disinclination to business he never engaged to any great degree in the active affairs of the world, but was extremely well received in society. . . . Mr. R. was extremely fond of company which induced him to spend the latter part of his life in London, where his morning drive and his evening club, conducted his days serenely to the age of eighty-four, at which point he died in 1778.

James Woodhouse, "the poetical shoemaker," who had been for several years the Montagus' bailiff at Sandleford, was now relegated to an annuity and a small farm. He was a better poet than a bailiff evidently, and that without crowning his brows with any laurels. Indeed his own opinion of his worth and works was clearly much higher than Mrs. Montagu's, and the parting was not entirely amicable, though he continued to act as a steward later on. He had a genuine love of literature, and his own contributions were at least prolific.

The beauties were evidently in force at the Wells this autumn. "I supped with Mrs. Crewe [who was a cousin of Mr. Montagu's] on Tuesday; the Thrales dined with me yesterday, and the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Clermont did me the honour to sup with me last night. . . ."

To Mrs. Vesey

Tunbridge Wells, *Oct.* 23.

I have conversed a great deal with Lady Clermont and am charm'd with her. She unites two things rarely united, the gentlest, most polite and flexible manners, with most firm and steady principles. She has very clear and nice discernment, and most excellent judgment. Her cap and her Gown will always be cut according to the fashion, her conduct will be directed by virtue, and her conversation never deviate from sincerity and truth. She has been here these three months with the Dss of Devonshire, to whom she is an invaluable friend, as she can strew the paths of virtue with flowers. I believe the Duchess of Devonshire one of the most amiable beings in the World. She has a form and face extreamly angelick, her temper is perfectly sweet, she has fine parts, the greatest purity of heart and innocence of mind possible, but *as goodness thinks no ill where no ill seems*, she does not keep so far aloof from the giddy and imprudent part of the World as one could wish, and that has made her the object of illgrounded censure ; however all her worst enemies have born testimony to the innocence of her actions, and that beauty, youth, and innocence, should not be security against satire is the reproach of this age. Mr. and Mrs. Thrale have been with us at Tunbridge this fortnight, but leave us tomorrow. . . . A friend of Miss Gregory's who is near the Camp has invited her to her house, and the Duchess of Devonshire has asked her to dine in her tent the day the King and Queen review, so she will see all to advantage.

Mrs. Montagu returned to Hill Street in November, and settled down for the winter in town ; she writes to Mrs. Vesey on the 13th :

Indeed my dear Friend it is not possible to tell you how happy I am in the hope of a most delightful winter in your Society, and in that blue room where all people are enchanted, tho the magic figure of the circle is vanished, thence ; a Philosopher, a fine Lady, and a Gallant Officer form a triangle in one corner ; a Maccaroni, a Poet, a Divine, a Beauty, and an Ottaheite Savage, a wondrous Pentagon in another ; then the Coalition of Parties, professions, and characters which compose the group standing in the middle of the room ; the flying squadrons of casual visitants that are ever coming in and going out ! Great Orators play a solo of declamation ; Witts lett off epigrams like minute guns ; the Sage speaks sentences, every one does his best to please the Lady of the enchanting room,

for all contend
to win her grace whom all commend.

Mrs. Vesey's determined efforts to prevent the formation of a "circle" in her assemblies was the subject of gentle chaff amongst her friends.

The enjoyment of Mrs. Vesey's Blue Room evenings must really have been—prodigious; and how she contrived to accommodate such large parties in her house in Bolton Row (which is now part of Curzon Street connecting the northern ends of Clarges and Bolton Streets) it is difficult to imagine. Mrs. Carter said she managed to preserve the motley crowd of her heterogeneous assemblies from quarrelling with each other by contriving to put them in perfect good humour with themselves. Without a grain of vanity or personal feeling she gave her whole attention to adapting herself to the feelings of others. Sofas and chairs, according to Fanny Burney, were pushed pell-mell about the apartments, leaving no zigzag pathway free from impediment; seats were placed back to back, all circles were broken up, and the gentle hostess darted about, two or three ear trumpets slung on her wrists or about her neck, carrying her stool and cushion from one end of the room to the other, and always just missing the gay talk she had seen in progress, and crying out in despair: "I can't conceive why nobody talks to-night. I can't catch a word." But she was everybody's pet Sylph, and even Walpole was led to exclaim, "What English heart ever excelled hers?" Laurence Sterne, who preferred his coteries à deux, had been exquisitely flattered to find her "contented to saunter lackadaisically with me round an exhausted Ranelagh, and give me your gentle amiable elegant sentiments in a tone of voice that was originally intended for a cherub." Still he too must needs "becassock myself in my cloak and be charmed to your warm cabinet" where, in spite of a cold, he hoped for voice enough to assure her of his admiration.

But Mrs. Vesey's letters already began to show signs of that despondent attitude which gradually took possession of her, and Mrs. Montagu, who was most tenderly attached to her " Sylph," said what she could to cheer and enliven her :

> The present state of things is certainly, to a certain degree, unprosperous. We are at great expences in Naval armaments, but it is very idle to be in despair and dejection at any thing that yet appears. A friend of Mr. Burkes just come from France calld on me yesterday, he says he was astonished at not finding in the french towns which the newspapers had reported full of troops with any more than their usual complement. They have a great many ships, but supposed to be ill manned, and far from being in a good condition in any respect. I find the apprehensions of a French war seem rather to subside. . . .
>
> Mr. Thomas Pitt is going abroad for two years for the recovery of his health. The town is quite empty. I was to visit Mrs. Thrale at Streatham the other day ; she inquired much after you, as did, with peculiar tenderness, Dr. Johnson. Mrs. Thrale has very lately brought forth a daughter, to whom I am Godmother.

Mrs. Montagu " never visited the West Indians in the neighbourhood because they would teach my servants to drink rum; nor the Nabobs, lest they should teach them to want to eat turtle " ; but she called on the new tenants at Dunstan :

To her Sister

Sept. the 25, SANDLEFORD.

> Sr Archer and Lady Crofts came this year to settle at Dunstan which had been some time lett to a Nabob. They sold their Deer out of the Park, put everything into order and strict economy, and intended to live here in that decent dignity which a large Seat and surrounding manors give. But alas ! the other evening they had some squabble, and my Lady set out alone, and on foot, towards Newbury. The Newbury Machine overtook her, she desired the Coachman to stop, and let her get in, he did not know her, and told her the Coach was full, then she said she wd ride on the box, a Civil man in the Coach said that by her dress and appearance she could not

have been used to that mode of travelling, and he wd give her his place and go himself on the box, thus they arrived at the Pelican, where unknown she slept that night, and next day went to Reading, where she now is negotiating a separation. Thus do this unhappy pair give a Comedy to the Neighbourhood. I think her Ladyship must be un peu brusque, to go away in this manner. I am sorry for her Daughters, they wd have appeard in a very different light to the World as coheiresses of Dunstan from what they will do at Boarding House and boarding school. The youngest is now with Mrs. Thompson, and I hear is to go to a boarding school at Thatcham; the eldest has been all the summer at Bromley, I presume Sr Archer thought she had better learn to smirk of Mrs. Hawkesworth than to frown of her Mother. I am sure, by a scornful glance Lady Crofts gave me, when I spoke of Mrs. Hawkesworth with praise, the Girl was not there with her approbation, indeed not knowing how ill this unhappy pair lived together I wonderd that she was not under the care of her Mother.

Throughout this year Mrs. Montagu's house building at Portman Square had been making steady progress, and she reports, with particular pride, that she paid its costs week by week out of her income. In the spring she had recorded:

Many people have offered to hire my [Hill Street] house, and that might be better for my heirs, and not so well for me; between Jan^{ry}. 1777 and Dec 1777 I paid for my service of plate, and my house [the Portman Square house then building] together £4,321 : 10s. out of my income and had not then a bill of £20 on my tradesmen's books.

And now in the late autumn she writes:

I am now very busy about the garden at my new house. Lord Harcourt has made a very pretty plan for it. I believe it will not be stately as the garden of Semiramis, nor perhaps as that where the "Sapient King with his fair spouse held dalliance," but for these puny modern times it will be pretty well, and it will grow laurels enough to crown Lord C. . . .,[1] when he returns from his American expedition. I shall give you a merry merry Vauxhall when my trees and shrubs are in order. I assure you it will be a very pretty demi saison garden ; in Winter it will not afford such shelter from storms as a forest of pines, nor in summer shade like the Groves of Oaks of our Druids, but it will serve as umbrellas and fans for Beaux and Belles.

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[1] Carlisle.

The laurels of Montagu House were the only ones awaiting poor Lord Carlisle. In June, Philadelphia, after all the splendours of the May Mischianza festivities given in honour of Sir William Howe, was evacuated by Clinton on express orders from home, and to the dismay of its inhabitants, of whom 3000 retired with the British army to New York. In July, D'Estaing, the French naval lieutenant-general, arrived off the coast, missed Lord Howe's fleet in the Delaware, followed them to New York and forced his way into Newport Sound, only to be dispersed with much damage by a storm ; upon which D'Estaing retired to Boston, and Sullivan's troops, weakened by desertion, with difficulty got away from Rhode Island. It was not till November that D'Estaing's fleet left Boston Harbour for the West Indies.

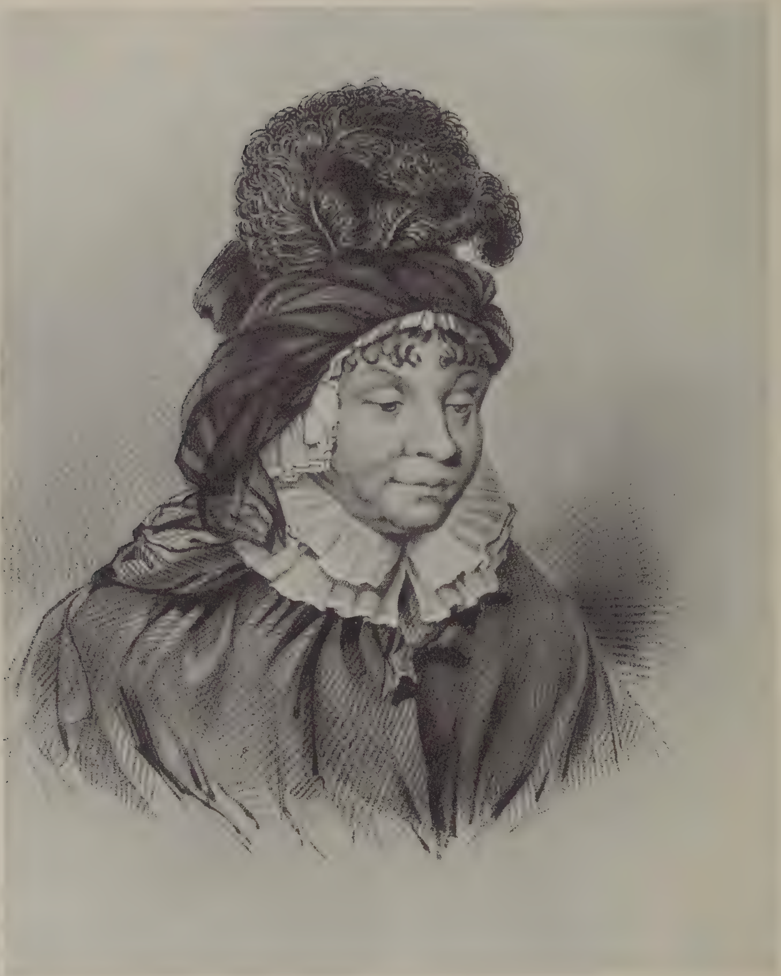
The Irish Protestants meanwhile — the country being denuded of troops sent to America, and invasion by France threatening—had raised a large and at present loyalist Volunteer force.

History repeats itself !

I hope Mr. Vesey has laid aside his design of going to Ireland this Autumn. If he goes, he sh^{d} enter the Corps of Volunteers, for they are the Governers of Ireland ; an English Gentleman who had money on an Irish Mortgage, not being able to get the interest due to him went to Ireland, and applied to the Lawyers to use the proper means to procure it, but by every one was answered, that the Mortgagee being one of the Volunteers they durst not use any compulsory methods to make him pay his debt.

Nov. 19.

Our forces are still in Camp, tho the season of the year, and the state of the weather, make such service very irksome. The apprehensions for Jamaica are at end for the present ;



HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY QUEEN CHARLOTTE
From a Sketch drawn from the life at Bath

D'Estaing is gone to America, where it is supposed he will be able to do less harm than he wd elsewhere. Byrons leaving his Station to convoy some of our Merchant Ships, and by that means giving D'Estaing opportunity to get out, is considerd as a great error, but errors are pardonable. The French and Spaniards seem to me to have made but a poor Summers business, and the Winter season seems unfavourable to projects of Invasion. I believe the Ministers are now more perplexd about Ireland than terrified at the power of the House of Bourbon. If the said Ministers do not act more roundly and boldly with the Irish than they have done in other matters we shall have a rebellion there. I hope we shall fairly and fully grant the free trade they ask. It will be more than a Century, I imagine, before they can rival us in Trade, and many events will fall out in such a series of years. A Nation cannot trade beyond its capital and credit. There are Gentlemen of great Landed property in Ireland, but no rich monied men, nor any Bank of great credit.

On December 11, to Mrs. Carter from Hill Street, Mrs. Montagu writes :

I was at the Drawing room yesterday. Lady Dartrey was so good as to be of the party. Her Majesty seems pretty far advanced to a 13th. The King looks well but is grown thin. I imagine there will be warm work about Mr. Keppel ; he is to be tried on some important articles. If he is found guilty he will be very popular, if innocent very easy, so I think his situation is as good as any man can be concerning whom there are doubts and disputes.

Her Majesty's "13th" was Octavius, who was born in the following February, and died in 1783. She had already presented the kingdom with seven sons and five daughters.

Admiral Keppel, after bitter recrimination with the second in command of the Channel Fleet, Sir Hugh Palliser, over the indecisive engagements with the French Fleet in July, had demanded a court-martial, and though fully acquitted, threw up his command. Naval and public opinion were very strongly in his favour, and all London was illuminated on his acquittal, whilst Palliser's house was wrecked by the mob.

To Mrs. Carter

Dec. 11.

. . . Whatever comes with a character of novelty awakens the attention of our Sylph ; the love of novelty however does not prevail over her affection for her old friend, and I believe she was much more delighted on Sunday last, when she dined here with the Burkes and Garricks. I am not quite sure that one does not pass ones time more agreably either with a quite new acquaintance or a very old friend than with persons who neither excite ones curiosity nor delight ones heart. . . . I should not have thought it strange if Mrs. Macauley had crossd the Atlantick to marry some arch rebel or even the descendant of a Regicide, but to unite herself with a boy and a Scotch boy is quite out of the path of such a comet.

The honest and sober people I meet (they are but few and they speak low) are much alarmd and shocked at the want of union and confidence and fidelity between all sets of politicians in and out of power . . . and indeed the debates are carried on in both houses in that species of oratory in which Billingsgate used to claim superiority. . . . Lady D—— was denied entrance to her house at her return from the opera, so she went to Duke H——ns where she remains. It is said the D of D will marry her ; if he does I wish him joy of his anticipated cuckoldom. I think he ought to add horns to his coat of arms. The age is wicked when men make W——s, but it is shameless when they marry them ; from infamy to virtue there is no return.

To her Sister

? *December.*

. . . Lady Carmarthen ran away yesterday with a young officer ; if he is wise he will soon desert her. I am glad she has rid the prettiest young man in England of the most vicious and detestable creature that ever disgraced the Race of Womankind. It wd make you laugh if you cd see how some of the Ladies, sujet à caution, have bridled their chins, and look'd discreet since Lady Derbys and Lady Carmarthens scamper ; as who shd say, we are not of the bad sort. . . . I sent to Mr. Hartley this day, his men having finished on monday as much of the fire plating as will be done for some time, desiring to pay him ; he made me a very obliging visit, but apologized for not bringing his account, because he had been entirely engaged in writing a pamphlet, which he gave me, instead of my giving him a draft on Mr. Hoare. I wish all my Workmen were politicians, and I might at least save the Interest of my debt to them. I heard but will not vouch for its truth, that Mrs. Macaulay drew £600 from the old Doctors Banker just before the marriage was known and her credit withdrawn. I believe Dr. Graham is a sad wretch and very capable of all that he is charged with. Mrs. Ord is very ill, and I am much concerned for her. I fear she will not last long. . . .

I think I saw your dear Spousey at the drawing room this day sennight, he looks old, but stout and well, Montagu is gone to the Westminster play to night. . . .

There is a report that Carolina will return to its allegiance. Neither the Ministry nor Minority seem to approve Adl Pallisers bringing a Court Marshal to sit on Keppel. The World goes better with us when Admirals fight more and scold less.

Lady Carmarthen was Lord Holderness's only daughter, Amelia D'Arcy. The young officer who carried her off to the continent was John Byron, father of the poet, who married her on Lord Carmarthen's obtaining his divorce. She died in 1784 in giving birth to a daughter, Augusta Mary Byron, who, in 1807, married her cousin Colonel George Leigh. Captain Byron married Catherine Gordon of Gight in 1785, and George Gordon, sixth Lord Byron, was born in 1788. Readers of Mrs. Beecher Stowe and of *Astarte* will not need to be reminded of the tragic association of the half-brother and sister.

David Hartley, the younger, who was to be in 1783 co-signatory with Franklin of the American Treaty, was the inventor of a plating to secure buildings and ships against fire, of which Mrs. Montagu made use in her new house.

Mrs. Macaulay, who has already been more than once referred to, was the republican authoress whose second marriage to a ship's doctor of two-and-twenty caused much amusement amongst the ladies of a coterie of which she was *not* a member. William

Graham was brother of James, the quack doctor, in whose Adelphi "Temple of Health" Emma Lyon, afterwards Nelson's Lady Hamilton, is said to have posed as the Goddess of Health.

Mrs. Scott had separated from her husband in 1752, only a year after their marriage, somewhat mysteriously. He was dismissed from the tutorship of Prince George on the dubious ground of Jacobitism, but there were evidently other reasons.

1779

DEATHS OF GARRICK, MARTHA RAY, AND SECOND LORD LYTTELTON—WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS

Garrick's death. At Bath. Harrow speeches. War and invasion. A Sylph assembly. Robert Potter and a portrait. Death of Martha Ray. Lord Temple's death. Paul Jones. Invasion scares. Treason talked. Christopher Anstey. Death of Second Lord Lyttelton. The Vision. His letters.

No letters of the early months of 1779 are to be found—owing probably to most of Mrs. Montagu's friends being, like herself, in London; but their absence is regrettable, as they would naturally have contained references to the death and the funeral of Garrick, who had been attacked by his old enemies, gout and stone, whilst on a visit at Althorpe at Christmas, was brought back to his house, No. 5 Adelphi Terrace, on January 15, and died there on the 20th.

Having injured her knee in an accident in April and been very unwell, Dr. Fothergill ordered Mrs. Montagu to Bath, where she secured a very good house in the Circus, in which she remained, with great benefit to her health, till the end of May.

After a reference to the death of Edward Dilly, her favourite publisher, she writes on June 10:

> The air of London does not well agree with me at this season of the year and I shall therefore defer going to town till the time draws near for my nephew to make his speech at Harrow. It is now the fashion at the great schools for the boys near the top of the school to repeat some speech from the Classicks. I was at Bath when Montagu made his first

appearance in this way, but I hear he acquitted himself pretty well, and Mr. Heath, imagining I should have some pleasure in hearing him, deferred his appointment to speak again till I could promise to attend, which I could not do till the third Speech day which is not till the first Thursday in July. He is then to appear in the character of Medea. I have desired him to do her all the justice he can for I believe she has been much injured by the Poets, who represent her as a wretch. I imagine she was only a learned lady when learned ladies were not so usual as now a days, and that like Mrs. Macauley she had the misfortune to fall in love with a handsome stripling, and that she made off with some of her Father's cash. . . .

The perpetually recurring thunder-cloud of the war loomed black again this summer. In a letter to Mr. Weller Pepys we read :

If when only rumours of wars were stirring gold was so scarce, what will be the case now we have the fatal certainty of a war with France and Spain, and a well founded apprehension of an invasion of Ireland. . . . I can easily imagine the party at the Thrales must have been very agreeable tho in general I am not fond of the society of a large Country family.

To Mrs. Carter on June 26 Mrs. Montagu announces her leaving Sandleford for Hill Street the next day :

I hope to see our dear Sylph ; she is tonight doing the honours of the *blue* room to as many Duchesses as love beaux esprits, and as many beaux esprits as love Duchesses. She kindly laments that I am not of the party, and to be sure I honour great ladies, and I admire great wits, but I am of the same opinion in regard to assemblies that is held concerning oysters, that they are never good in a month that has not the letter R in it.

Robert Potter, the Master of Scarning School and translator of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, was amongst Mrs. Montagu's admirers and correspondents, and the following letter relates to the portrait of her by Richard Doughty, which has been more than once engraved.

From R. Potter

Scarning, 28 *June*.

Whilst I was in town last Summer, my chief amusement was to ramble from Painter to Painter; I was often at Sr Joshua's, and one day in his gallery from behind another picture I drew out yr Portrait; it is a good Copy, taken by a very pretty young man, Doughty, at that time a Pupil of Sr Joshua's; he is now brushing away for himself in Little Titchfield Street; it is his Property: now, Madam, I cannot forbear confessing to you the naughtiness of my heart; it immediately occurred to me, This Portrait Stands here neglected and concealed; the *Copy* of a Goddess would not be regarded here; if it were in my Parlour, it would be an Ornament to my house, and a glory to me: this led me to treat with Mr. Doughty for it; out of delicacy he consulted Sr Joshua, and received the only answer that could be given, "If Mrs. Montagu consents." I would have filched, purloined, or been guilty of any clandestine measure to have made myself master of such a treasure, but was unable to execute my designs; and as I am unwilling to give up a desirable point, I have no other Method to obtain it, than to break through the blush of Modesty, and sollicit the favour of you in form; if you can have the goodness not to refuse me, a line from you to Mr. Doughty will put me in possession of what I shall esteem a most valuable acquisition: I am certain I shall translate Euripides with more Spirit, if I have this picture before my Eyes. This work goes on tolerably well; etc.

The scare of French invasion became acute in July. Mrs. Montagu declares: "Lord Shelburne, Mr. Dartrey, Mr. Burke and the Bishop of St. Asaph have convinced our Sylph that the French and the Spaniards

At one sup
will eat us up
as man would eat an apple."

Lady Mount Edgcumbe had left Mount Edgcumbe for London, in fear of foreign foes landing, and Mrs. Carter was urged to leave Deal and come to Sandleford to escape capture. The Veseys actually came to Sandleford, but "are going to Mr. Burke on Thursday. I have endeavoured to quiet the busy fears of our Sylph, but Mr. Burke, who is a lover of the sublime, and says it never exists without terror, will bring back her apprehensions ; and indeed they are spectres of the most gigantic sublime."

Mrs. Vesey was full of anxieties over improbable "dragons," but apparently failed to see the seriousness of a very alarming attack with which her husband was seized during their stay at Sandleford.

Among the much-discussed events of this autumn was the death of Martha Ray, the accomplished mistress of Lord Sandwich. Mrs. Montagu writes :

> I find Ld Sandwich was much struck with the death of Miss Ray, he persuaded her to go to the play that night, as she had for some time staid much at home, because his Lordship was in a vexatious situation, and she thought wanted some Person to chatt with him in the evening when business was over. She has left 4 Sons and a Daughter. Lady Corke is gone to live with him, so he is prudent enough not to intend to bring home another of the Ray species, indeed he is rather too old for a new amour.

Martha Ray had been for twenty years the mistress of the fourth Earl of Sandwich. She had become indeed much more than a mistress, a faithfully devoted companion. She was a girl of unusual elegance and talents, endowed with a very musical voice. Hackman, her lover and her murderer, had been in the army and had afterwards entered the Church and been ordained deacon. He had repeatedly offered her marriage, which she steadfastly refused. Maddened by the hopelessness of his passion he shot her through the head as she was leaving Covent Garden Theatre on the night of April 7, after witnessing Bickerstaffe's *Love in a Village*. Hackman had taken two pistols (about which Dr. Johnson and Beauclerk had a very heated argument), but failed to shoot himself. Before his execution he craved Lord Sandwich's forgiveness, which the Earl did not refuse ; saying it was an act of frenzy, which had robbed him of all comfort in this world. Miss Ray, before being domiciled with him, used to live at a glover's shop, No. 4 Tavistock Row.

Dr. Johnson, it will be remembered, got into a great rage with Topham Beauclerk, who argued that the second pistol was brought for suicide; and instanced the case of Mr. Fitzherbert, "who loved buttered muffins but durst not eat them because they disagreed with his stomach, resolved to shoot himself, and then he eat three buttered muffins for breakfast before shooting himself, knowing that he should not be troubled with indigestion: *he* had two charged pistols."

Lord Temple, who was the first Lord Lyttelton's cousin and an old friend of Mrs. Montagu's, died in September of this year; and in referring to his death in a letter to Mrs. Vesey she writes recalling "the magnificent and beautiful drives round his place; he carried me many miles one morning in his phaeton to show me the grandeurs of Stowe":

> Of the Constellation you allude to, he was certainly the least bright and luminous, but his Wealth, like Saturns ring, made him appear with lustre in the Firmament, and he not only inherited the Fortune and Title of his Uncle Cobham, but also a kind of glory that belong'd to Stowe, which was looked upon for some years as the retreat of Patriots, and haunt of the Muses. It was frequented by *chiefs out of War, and statesmen out of place*, and celebrated by Poets, so the Mob supposed it was the favorite and chosen place of Virtue and Witt; alas! the Patriots went thither because they were angry, and the Witts because they were hungry, and the Master administerd abundantly to the passions of the one, and the appetites of the other. The old Lord Cobhams Nephews, from their talents and situations, added to his importance, and both his Lordship and his Successor understood how to avail themselves of everything that would serve their purpose of being of importance in the State. Lord Temple was a much better man than his Uncle.

Of the invasion scares which were periodic during this century, that of this autumn was particularly alarming, and a few extracts may be given which provide at least the feminine aspect:

> I believe as you do, that Sr C. Hardy has orders to fight; if a mere Naval defeat was the worst I shd approve the orders, but as an Invasion will follow I think we ought to be more discreet than valiant, and avoid a battle if possible. Every time we hear any Portsmouth Guns, the report of which the wind often brings to us, I feel a kind of horror. C'est jouer gros jeu, and I have no love for games of hazard.
>
> During the hay and Corn harvest the Workpeople drank me nine Hogsheads of small beer, but with small beer there is no drunkeness nor intemperance; it is well employed in refreshing the thirsty labourer. Last night I orderd some Ale, and I am afraid some were more than soberly jolly. . . .
>
> My newspaper I met with yesterday says there are Privateers just off Tinmouth and they are afraid of a descent; but while the whole Kingdom is in danger I cannot put myself in a fright for my Cows and Oxen at Jarrow. . . . Mrs. Vesey, who easily takes alarm, and is now within the illboding voice of our Patriots, has lamented the taking of Gibraltar, besides many internal calamities by the french invasion. She wd believe Mr. Benjamin if he told her the french were in Cornhill, and indeed how shd the Ship and Royal point there, tho very famous, be a match for the united fleets of France and Spain.

Sir Charles Hardy was this year in command of the Channel Fleet, and the naval pundits of Whitehall and Grub Street were bravely urging him to fight.

To Mrs. Carter

> I hope Paul Jones will be taken before he makes a visit to Deal. I had a letter from Ed: Brown on thursday night, which told me he was then off Tynemouth. I hope he will not victual his Fleet with my good oxen at Jarrow. It will be barbarous to rob a poor Coal owner now the Coal trade is so bad. Wheat sells at 3s. 9d. a Bushel at Newcastle, 20 stone of Pottatoes, 14 lbs. to the stone for 3d. Meat 2d. a pound. However if the rich suffer our labouring people live well, wages being high and provisions low in price.

To Mrs. Carter

Oct. 3rd.

My Sister arrived here on tuesday. Miss Wilkes the day before. to my great comfort the Wilkes family are much happier than they were. Their eldest Son has a good employment under one of our Commissarys in America; he has acquitted himself there to his own credit and the satisfaction of the Person who employs him, but severe application brought on illness, and he is come over for a while; he calld here the other day in his way to Bath. I askd him if it was true, that the Americans in general wishd to return their allegiance, he said he believed more than three parts in four wishd it, but were withheld by the severity of the Leaders of the Rebellion, who exercise the most horrid cruelties on any discovery of disaffection to them. One silver Dollar is now equal to 30 of paper. A state of violence can hardly be long upheld, nor can people carry on the traffick of life without some certainty in the Exchange. The paper the Congress issue has been ever in decrease of value.

You ask me if my black Regiment under ground wd not oppose Invaders; I have no doubt but they wd make as stout resistance as any unarmed men. They desired last Summer that I wd send them a stand of Arms, but I begged to be excused, for the scepticks in History now deny there was ever a Nation of Amazons, so I cd not find a Precedent for being a General. There is no question but amongst us we could furnish a number of very fine fellows, stout of heart and limb for defence of our Coast; but as the Coal trader will, I hope, long outlive the War, it wd be dangerous to teach them the military discipline, and have arms which they might on improper occasions seize upon.

Paul Jones, the plucky naval adventurer, had, after five years of smuggling and the slave trade, entered the American navy, and in 1778 and 1779 carried out, first in the *Ranger*, and later in the *Bonhomme Richard*, a series of remarkable raids on the English and Scottish coasts. In September 1779 his ships threatened Edinburgh, and on the 23rd, engaged and captured H.M.S. *Serapis* while on convoy duty off the Tyne.

"Flamborough reapers," says Carlyle, "home-going, pause on the hillside: for what sulphur-cloud is that that defaces the sleek sea; sulphur-cloud spitting streaks of fire? A sea cockfight it is, and of the hottest; where British *Serapis* and French-American *Bon Homme Richard* do lash and throttle each other, in their fashion; and lo, the desperate valour has suffocated the deliberate, and Paul Jones too is of the Kings of the Sea!"

Though Gibraltar held out, and the presence of the French in Cornhill was unconfirmed, Mrs. Vesey was by now in a state of terror "of the most Gigantic Sublime," and Mr. Burke, as Mrs. Montagu predicted, seems to have taken a malicious delight in giving wings to her worst apprehensions:

> She gives to the Invaders she expects des bottes de sept lieux, so that after having strided from Calais to Dover, at the next step they will be at the royal exchange or where they please. All the terrors, all the horrors, all the wounds, and all the deaths, that have happend from Invasion, or Siege, from the Argonautick expedition, and siege of Troy, to this day, she supposes the french will act for our benefit as soon as they can effect a landing. I have indeed prevaild upon her to omit some incidents which happend at the Siege of Jerusalem, because the sin for which the Jews were punishd was far beyond all other crime; but had the Synagogue only slain the 12 apostles I do not know that she wd have made a very essential difference between that and our making War on the Congress in America. St. Franklyn, St. Adams etc. are very sacred characters in her opinion; of all party effronterie surely the greatest is that of applauding Mr. Keppel for having avoided an Engagement with only 3 or 4 ships fewer than the Enemy, and when no ill consequence of an Invasion was to follow; and now to desire Hardy may fight, because he must assuredly beat a Fleet double in number to his own, and a defeat will bring on an Invasion. For my own part I keep my mind in a composed state. The Event of all this is in the hands of him who never punishes above what we can bear, nor more than is good for us; the Invader and the Invaded are his, and he only can and will make the Event in the end for the benefit of each. I pity all

who have dear objects immediately engaged in this dire contention; their trepidations must be terrible.

Mrs. Montagu was much too staunch a courtier to see what the country at large was slowly realising, that the war was being uselessly prolonged by the obstinate determination of the King to force his personal conviction against his ministers, parliament, and the majority of the nation. Lord North had repeatedly tendered his resignation, and had repeatedly made it clear that he disbelieved in the policy he was forced to administer. But His Majesty was unwaveringly resolute to steer the bark; and while pledging himself never to be dictated to by opposition, considered that his ministers should continue to execute his wishes and "not mind being now and then in a minority."

Had the war gone successfully, the acquiescence of the country in this Royal supremacy might have continued; but mismanagement and disaster awakened audible dissatisfaction, and the time was near when His Majesty's faithful Commons were to pronounce that "the influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing and ought to be diminished."

Mrs. Montagu was shocked by the first rumbling of sedition:

Sept. 17.

I heartily wish our present Ministers wd resign their places, for to tell you the truth I believe the present intention is to raise a Civil War. It is now, I understand, as usual with the middling sort of folks to talk treason as to hum a tune or whistle. Indeed not a few of higher rank very openly speak of the K—— in a manner in which the first Magistrate of any Country never was treated. Dr. —— whose Uncle the K—— made B—— of W: and whō by that means is Dean of W: daily uses this phrase, that his Lsp. has the worst head and the worst heart of any man in his Dominions. Such a Lye is black enough as only relating to the Man, but when that Man is our Lawfull Sovereign treason makes it a Lye in grain; ingratitude for benefits, which wd [be] enough to stigmatize the speech and the speaker, is lost in the deeper crimes. I hear it is the fashion to talk treason in the City, however it is less shocking from the Gown of the Common Councilman, than from the Sacerdotal habit. The Licentious spirit of the times, the aversion to all law, rule, and discipline, makes a combined danger more alarming to me than the united fleets of France and Spain. . . .

I am glad that the burthen of this War falls upon the Rich. Provisions of all kinds are cheap, and labourers wages are high, so the day labourers condition is mended; they were the only distress'd people in this Nation.

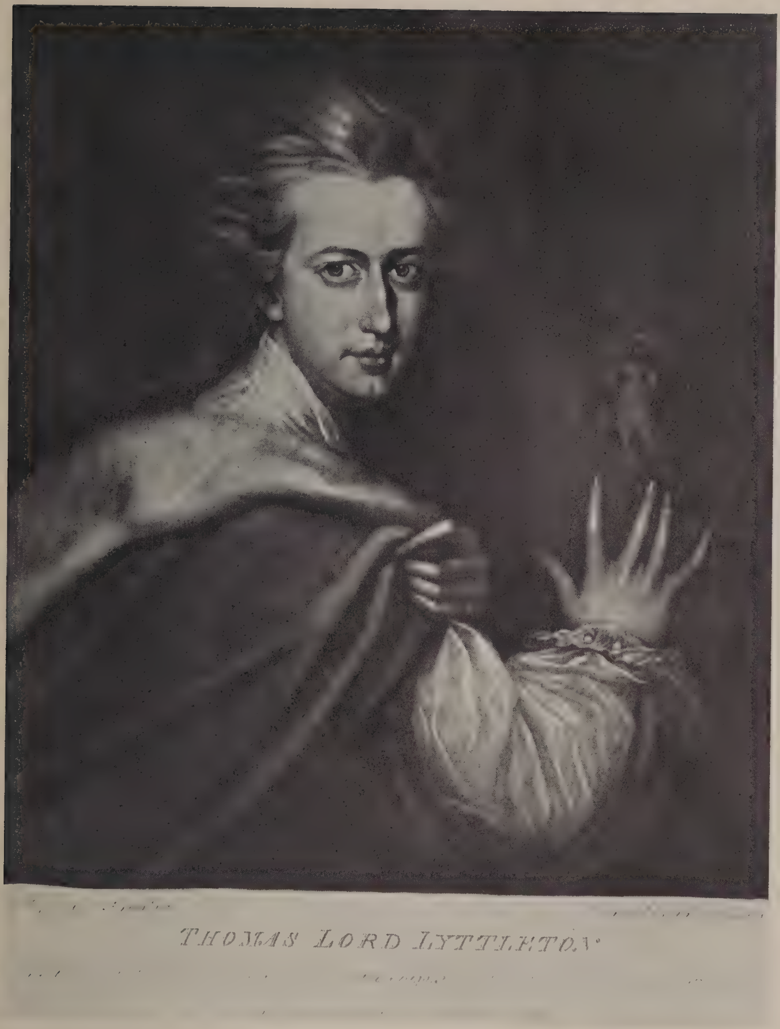
Oct. 3.

The humour of the people, and the condition of the times are alarming. The moment news arrived in Town that Sr C: Hardy had avoided an engagement with the combined Fleet Treason was talkd in every Alehouse, and sung in every street. It growled in the City, roared at St. Giles's, and was softly whisperd at the West end of the Town. A substantial tradesman of London, who calld here in his way to Bath, astonished my Servants by talking Treason, and relating what passd at his Club etc.

In the late autumn Christopher Anstey, the satirical poet of *The New Bath Guide*, spent some days at Sandleford, and is thus referred to:

One should not naturally suppose the author of the Bath Guide to be the most careful and tender of Fathers; but such he is, and his paternal Virtues do not want subjects, for he has nine children.

The death of "Naughty Tom," the second Lord Lyttelton, which occurred under circumstances that were the subject of much gossip and discussion at the time, is not, apparently, referred to in any of the letters of this winter. The story of the vision which, flying in at his window at Pitt Place or Hill Street, took the form of a woman, and warned his Lordship that in three days he would die, has been recounted in many forms and with a wealth of variations; the facts appear to have been that he spoke at length on the state of affairs in Ireland at the opening of Parliament


THOMAS LORD LYTTLETON

THOMAS, SECOND LORD LYTTELTON
After Richard Cosway

on Thursday, November 25, winning high encomiums from both sides of the House; got to bed at his house in Hill Street about 2 A.M., looking ill, and went down to his secluded villa near Epsom on Friday or Saturday, where the party consisted of Lord Fortescue's son, Captain Wolseley, Mrs. Flood, and the three Misses Amphlett. On the Saturday evening, after a substantial dinner and some music and merriment he withdrew, soon after eleven, and fell back dead in his bed as his valet was removing his waistcoat; thus failing to "bilk the ghost" whose three days' warning appears to have been given on the previous Wednesday.

Though this collection contributes nothing to the pile of stories which the event produced, part of a letter of Mrs. Montagu's to the Duchess of Portland which was printed from the manuscripts at Longleat by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1904, may be reproduced here:

To the Duchess of Portland

HILL STREET, *December* 1.

Oh Madam, did not the sudden death of Lord Lyttelton make you rejoice that his good father did not live to see an event for which the poor young man was so little prepared! My servants saw him pass my door with three gay females at two o'clock; these girls were three sisters and his cousins; by eleven o'clock that night he was called to another world! He carried these Miss Amfletts in his coach to his villa near Epsom; at supper, I hear, he declared himself hungry; soon after complained of pain at his stomach, and expired.

The usual tenor of his life, the horrid party of pleasure he was, at the time of his death engaged in, would fill one with unspeakable terrors, if one had not some reason to imagine there was a tincture of madness in him. I have heard his father say with tears in his eyes that however dreadful it was to a parent to think their children mad, his son was such.

He was glad to fly to it as a refuge from apprehensions more terrible; but in that opinion he had a hope the young man's outrageously bad conduct would render him unhappy only in this world. It is said he has left £5000 to each of these Miss Amfletts; poor amend for their loss of reputation, if that be all they have lost. . . . There was an elaborate encomium upon him in my newspaper to-day. It is the fashion, and a very pernicious one, to make a man's parts a kind of apology for his wickedness, but surely they aggravate guilt in a greater degree than they grace virtue.

If Mrs. Montagu's servants' report is correct it would seem that Lord Lyttelton only went down to Pitt Place on the Saturday afternoon, and another variant is contributed to the myth. As her house was but a few doors from his, they are hardly likely to have been mistaken.

Mrs. Montagu had done her level best for the graceless son of her devoted friend; but, as she once wrote to Tom, "when youth and age hold dialogue some contradictions will pass." She had encouraged his early studies, directed his travels, praised his talents, tried to steer his passions and arouse his ambition. "Consideration," she had written to him in 1765, "will follow profitable talents, shining ones gain only admiration. It will be your fault if you are not now approved, in time esteemed; and then I shall see you attain all I have wished for you and predicted of you. As I have already the wrinkles of a Sibyl I shall be extremely mortified not to have the prophetick skill."

That he had more than ordinary talent may be readily admitted, without accepting the theory of the *Quarterly Review* of December 1851, which attributed the *Letters of Junius* to him, as the product of the seven years of shrouded seclusion previous to his father's death; years which the Reviewer thought must have been spent in intellectual exercises, but which it seems were largely squandered in habits of profligacy.

William Combe, author of *Doctor Syntax*, is said to have confessed circumstantially to Major Cockburn that he was himself the author of the *Letters of the late Lord Lyttelton*. But Combe's inordinate vanity may quite possibly have led him, as Thomas Frost asserts, to claim their authorship rather than merely their editorship, and his unsupported statement should not, under the circumstances, be accepted as final. Nichol and the author of the *Quarterly Review* article on Junius believed the Letters genuine. And Mrs. Climenson, I find, took care to record the same conviction. Whoever wrote them was certainly well acquainted with, or had access to private information about, young Lyttelton and his family affairs.

1780

THE BUILDING OF MONTAGU HOUSE—THE GORDON RIOTS

Spring visit to Bath. Its architecture and habitués. James Stuart. Her dog. Hardman's Rappee. Sir William Jones. Mrs. Thrale. Rodney. A naval amazon. Lord George Gordon and the Riots. London ablaze. Sheridan's prologue. Gordon's forebears. Mr. Anstey. Letter from Mrs. Vesey. Riots at Bath. Lord Henry Clinton. General Oglethorpe. Action off Martinique. Sir George Rodney. Lord Winchilsea. Mr. Vesey. Camp in St. James's Park. Madame de Vaucluze. North Carolina. The rioting over. Active youth. Mr. Pitt's tutor. A character study. A circular tour. Montagu House. How paid for. Mrs. Montagu at 60. Autumn visit to Bath. A Newbury Ball. Wyatt's plans for Sandleford. The new house. Mrs. Scott. The second Lord Lyttelton's death. His character. Dr. Fothergill.

Mrs. Montagu and most of her friends being within calling distance in London through the early months of the year, there are, as usual, few letters till April, when she went to Bath; where she found Beilby Porteous Bishop of Chester; Mr. Thrale, in tolerable plight (he had had a second apoplectic seizure in February); Lord Spencer; Mrs. Cholmeley, and other water-drinking friends. She was at first crammed into a small house which, had the weather been warm, would have demolished her: "A small house, tight stays and strait shoes are plagues worthy to be put in the Litany of Worldly things"; but after a week or two she moved into Lord Milford's more spacious abode in the Circus:

I can now give my dear Friend some account of Bath, which appeared to me so alterd from the time I was last here as a water drinker that I know as little of it as if I had never seen it before. As to the Town you may figure it to yourself by supposing Cavendish Square, Portman Square, and Portland Place, communicating with each other by intermediate streets, and forming a little City; but the beautiful situation of the Crescent cannot be understood by any comparison with any thing in any Town whatever. Immediately before the Houses there is a large space paved with the Bath stone, beyond there is a beautiful green lawn fenced by an Iron rail, where sheep are feeding, and to this enclosure the Inhabitants of the Crescent have a key, so that it serves as a general garden for walking. The Lawn is bounded on the other side by high Hills coverd with a verdure which excells any verdure I ever saw. I had intended giving you a long account of every thing here, but Ld Stormont, the Primate of Ireland, Mr. Webb whose book upon painting perhaps you have read, and diverse others have been with me this evening, and I must make up my packet.

In spite of its beauties, she found Bath less attractive than ever. Its cosmopolitan assemblage, its mannish misses, its lack of home-life and a stable society seemed to her to make of it a very unsatisfactory abode; and its visitors, away from their domains and dependents, their management and social duties, were neither yeomen nor citizens, but excommunicate. The smart folk had *un ton* but were not *le ton*.

To judge by their dress their manners must have a strong accent; the misses have the air mien and habit militaire. The elderly ladies are fearfully and wonderfully dressed. They wear on their heads a thing they call a caleche, which makes them look like the hooded serpent preserved in the Museums. When one meets an unknown face in other places one asks, Who is that? but here one is almost tempted to enquire, What is that?

The dress and manners of the Bath visitors annoyed her greatly. A few cuttings from letters of various dates will serve to convey her sentiments:

As I do not love any Town but our Capital, I shd think being out of the reach of the Misses who strutt about in a morning in Riding dresses and uniforms and the Maccaronies who trip in pumps and with Parasols over their heads, I shd

> think it the better, but in bad weather the situation must be much exposed.
>
> If the sun is so powerfull as to be dangerous to Misses beauty she does not retire to her chamber till the fervour of the noon is over, but takes her Umbrella; if dripping rains, snow, or hail threaten to impair the gloss of her apparel, and spoil her shoes, she adds a pair of pattens to her equipment, and if the North East wind rages she takes shelter in a Mans surtout coat. The decent Ladies have none of her worship. The Goddess Trivia has all the devotion of her heart, and whole sacrifice of her time. Alas what Wives, Mothers, and Mistresses of families will this Academy furnish!
>
> A quiet sober woman is a rarity in these times. How the misses waddle and straddle and strut and swagger about the streets here, one arm a kimbo, the other swinging; the dear creatures wear short great coats like my pitmens wives in North^{d}.
>
> I never saw such a set of people as appear in the publick rooms, their dress is most elaborately ugly. A frisseur is employ'd three hours in a morning to make a young Lady look like a Virgin Hottentot or Squaw, all art ends in giving them the ferocious air of uncomb'd savages. I met a young man who I took for one of the Cherokee Kings lately arrived but was assured he was an Irish beau who was to begin the Ball. . . .

Meanwhile her house in Portman Square was nearing completion, and Leonard Smelt was superintending the work during her absence. One or two extracts from her letters to him will show how things were progressing.

Her architect, unfortunately, was rather a source of anxiety:

> I am in doubtfull cases often as uneasy for fear my suspicion should be false, as for fear it should be true. I have found out that in dealing with Mr. Stuart great caution is necessary. I chose him for my architect on account of his disinterestedness and contempt of money; I did not see how any mischief to my pocket could arise from these qualities, or indeed with these qualities, but Satan is more cunning than I am, and this sly enemy of human virtue found many assailable and weak places about him, and the said Mr. Satan finding at some peephole into the human soul, or by observation on external action that

what workmen did by bribery of guineas to many architects could be effected on him by pipes and tobacco and pots of porter in ale houses and night cellars, I speak it not on suspicion but certain information, that since he began my house he has been for a fortnight together in the most drunken condition with these fellows. S^r^ Sampson Gideon for whom he was building a house when I began mine, was obliged to take many precautions to prevent being imposed on by the workmen whose bills he assented to. About a year and a half ago Stuart had by a long uninterrupted state of drunkenness brought himself into such a condition of mind and body as I feard irrecoverable, to this I attribute the many falsehoods of which I gave him proof by shewing to him his own letters. Tho he does not mean (I believe) to tell fibs, it is impossible to rely on any thing he says. It w^d^ be tedious to tell you how often I have been obliged to confront him with the workmen whom he blamed for not having executed his orders, and he was then obliged to confess he had forgotten to deliver the designs. Mr. Gandon writes me by this days post that Mr. Stuart has put the design for the Chimney piece in your room in hand; I wish this may be so, but as he told you he would send the design to me, and has not done it, I fear he may not have deliverd it to the artists. In business the strait line is the line of beauty, but Stuart is apt to choose the waving line.

Love me love my Dog is a venerable proverb. I wd therefore insinuate that when you visit *our* House in Portman Square if you wd charge Valency to take great care of my newfoundland dog I shd be infinitely obliged to you. Tho poor Valency alias Valenensina is descended from a Spanish Nobleman, he wd be ill qualified for a Bull feast, not only the Bull to be baited, but the Dogs which were to bait the Bull wd have been objects of terror to him. He is an honest poor Creature but misfortunes have quelld his spirit, and I am afraid that he shd keep the poor Dog too much chained, or be wanting in some of those attentions due on my part to an animal who vigilantly guards my property, caresses my friends, and scares away those he thinks my enemies; he is not le chien savant, has none of the pedantries of art, but is by nature sagacious and faithfull, and full of moral sentiment and native wisdom. I have but rarely met with his equal on two legs. If you ask how my favourite Dog does and if he lets him have due liberty (I wd not, if all the Dogs in the Neighbourhood barked petition, grant him more) it will have good effect.

As I love mischief I will tell you, that the false Gregory has given you a Rival, she is a little in love with the Bishop of Chester, not only in the Pulpit, but even when he sits in the circle at my fire side. Indeed he is one of the most amiable as well as the most ingenious Men I have ever met with, and a divine Preacher.

Has Sr J: Reynolds convey'd some ray of her Majestys Soul into her Portrait? I was told he had succeeded in that important article in doing the Kings.

So many people were anxious to view the great house that she was obliged to ask Mr. Smelt to issue tickets to any visitors he pleased, but to instruct Valency to admit none without tickets, as fresh paint, etc., was getting damaged.

The hard drinking of the times was not confined to the gentry, and even so excellent a mistress as Mrs. Montagu could not be sure of sober servants. Of one who had died just before she went to Bath she writes:

He was perfectly well on wednesday morn, but as was his sad practise, drank much ale and drams, and complained of being indisposed at dinner time, went to bed and said he was better and pure easy at 12 o'clock, at 5 he expired. He was a faithful, honest, affable Servant, and therefore I valued him, but for above a year he was rarely a whole day sober.

I am very well and have got as good an habitation as Bath will afford, and when you come I shall be much better pleased with the place. I will beg of you if you stop in Town to get me a pound of Hardmans Rappee no 37, it is the only snuff I can take constantly.

In May she wrote at length to Mr. Weller Pepys begging his influence on behalf of Mr. Jones, candidate for the University of Oxford. "If the Muses were the Electors he would carry the election from every candidate that could offer. He possesses the keys of all their treasures and can deal them forth for the world." Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, the great orientalist and judge, who was said to have acquired a knowledge of thirty-six languages, was an early friend of Mrs. Montagu's. She speaks of her "affection" for him; and as his father was an eminent mathematician, he was probably well known to Mr. Montagu.

She saw a good deal of the Thrales during this Bath visit, though, as she wrote to Mr. W. Pepys:

> I have lamented that Mrs. Thrale was at as great a distance almost from me as the Magnitude of Bath wd allow, but however that is not the worst circumstance; the number of acquaintance I have here leaves me little time at my own command. She is to set out for London the day after to-morrow, and with infinite satisfaction I see my stay at this place terminate the next day. I hope to sleep at Sandleford on saturday night, and what is better to awake there on sunday morning, for at this place the whole of life is a mere idle dream. . . .
>
> I know you will be glad to hear Mr. Thrale is certainly mended in his health.

Writing to express his regret that he had no University vote to give to Mr. Jones, Pepys adds, on May 29:

> Don't you feel the utmost Indignation at this abominable Behaviour of Rodney's Captains in the moment of Attack? One wou'd have thought that such Heroick Valour wou'd have inspir'd a Coward with Feelings of Courage; Certain it is, that it had such an Effect upon a Woman (one of the Sailors wives who (for washing) Rodney suffer'd to be on board) that during all the heat of the Engagement She never ceas'd to expose herself in the most perilous situations in supplying the Men with incessant Alacrity with powder etc. and was so distinguish'd in the midst of that dreadful Scene, that when the Engagement was over, Sir George Rodney call'd Her upon Deck, and in the hearing of all his Crew, return'd her Thanks with a present of Ten Guineas for her Behaviour. You know with how much pleasure I collect every thing that does honour to your Sex, and will not therefore wonder if I cou'd not resist the temptation of communicating this Anecdote of female Merit tho' it be a little eccentrick.

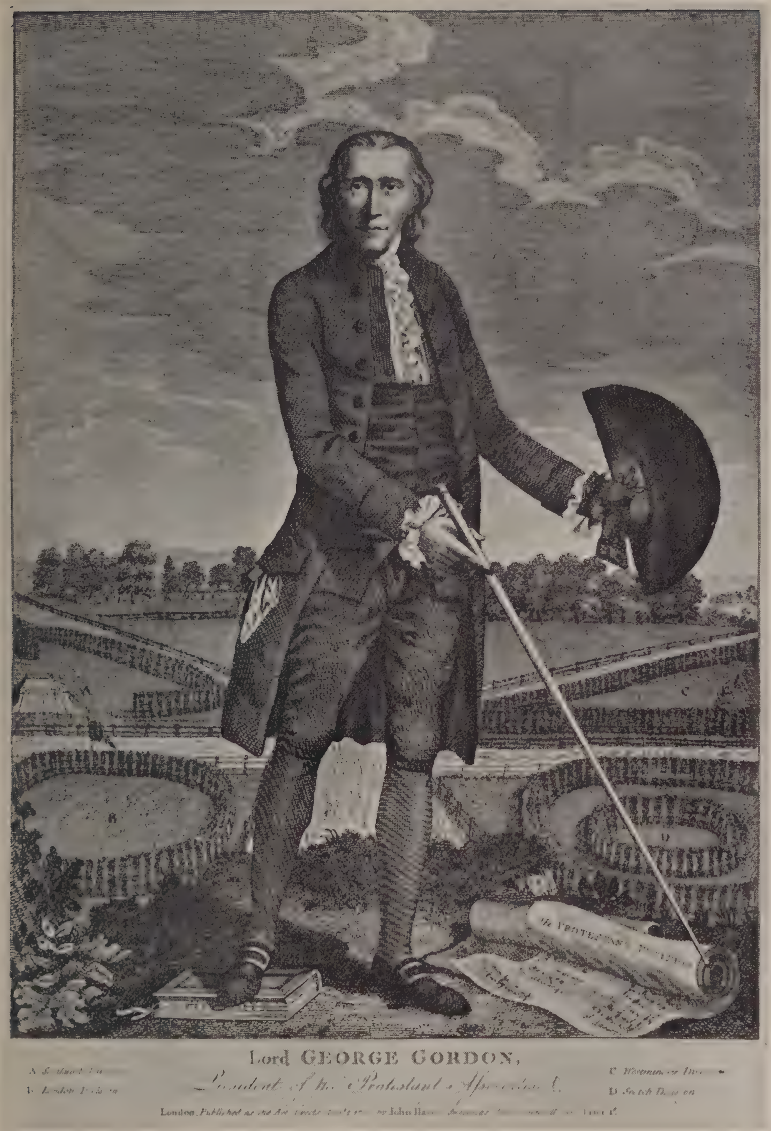
The incident is thus tersely related in Major-General Mundy's *Life of Lord Rodney*:

When a woman who had, contrary to the rules of the navy, secreted herself in her husband's cabin, and fought a quarter-deck gun in the room of her wounded husband who was down in the cockpit, Lord Rodney severely reprimanded her for breach of orders, but gave her, immediately after, ten guineas for so valiantly sustaining the post of her wounded husband.

Mrs. Montagu returned from Bath to Sandleford in May, and in a letter of the 13th from her sister we get the first rumble of the storm that was to burst in riot and bloodshed two or three weeks later :

Have you not been amused with Lord George Gordon's speeches and motions ? I want to know whether the man really ought to be an Inhabitant of Bedlam, or whether out of the national spirit of economy he wished to be lodged in the Tower, that he might live at the public expence. However one must allow that the mouth of a million and half of people may naturally enough be very noisy.

Charles Dickens has immortalised for us in *Barnaby Rudge* that extraordinary fanatic, " about the middle height and of a sallow complexion with an aquiline nose and long hair of a reddish brown, combed perfectly straight and smooth about his ears, and slightly powdered," who at the age of thirty made a red hell of London during the first week of June 1780. On the Tuesday Newgate was stormed, its prisoners let loose, and the building burnt to the ground, and Clerkenwell shared the same fate ; Sir John Fielding's, Lord Mansfield's, and other houses were sacked and burnt. The Wednesday was even worse. " Let those who were not spectators of it judge what the inhabitants felt when they beheld at the same time the flames ascending and rolling in clouds from the King's Bench and Fleet Prisons, from New Bridewell, from the toll gates on Blackfriars Bridge, from houses in every quarter of the town, and particularly from the bottom and middle of Holborn where the conflagration was horrible beyond description. . . . Six-and-thirty fires all blazing at one time


Lord GEORGE GORDON,
President of the Protestant Association
C Westminster
D Scotch
The PROTESTANT PETITION
B
C
D
London, Published
John

LORD GEORGE GORDON
After R. Brau

and in different quarters of the city were to be seen from one spot. The tremendous roar of the authors of these terrible scenes was heard at one instant, and at the next the dreadful report of soldiers' musquets firing in platoons and from different quarters ; in short, everything served to impress the mind, with ideas of universal anarchy and approaching desolation." Fortunately, both the attacks on the Bank of England failed, the soldiers holding every street in the immediate vicinity. But the great distillery of Langdale, a rich Roman Catholic, was successfully captured and fired. " Rivers of spirit ran in all the conduits and blazed as they ran. Men drunk with liquor and maddened with excitement kneeled to drink, and drinking, fell and died where they lay." The death-roll directly returned was 285, but the casualties were undoubtedly much heavier than this. Forty-one of the captured ringleaders were condemned to death, and twenty-nine were actually executed. At long last Lord George Gordon was himself arrested on the 9th, and taken to the Tower. By an absurd piece of folly he was tried for High Treason, ably defended by Erskine, and acquitted. Later he fled to Holland, but was arrested by the Dutch on a charge of libelling the French queen, for which he was committed to Newgate, where this pestilent madman died of jail fever in 1793.

Fortunately for her delicate self, unluckily for our chronicle, Mrs. Montagu was at Sandleford during the riots, and was dependent on Mrs. Vesey's " gigantic sublime " and a few travellers' tales for news of the doings of its imbecile mob. Her letters have the cool and detached temper of her secluded retreat, and she is able to criticise Sheridan's prologue while London is ablaze in all directions.

To Mrs. Vesey

SANDLEFORD, *June the 8th.*

By some fatality the moment a Man in this Country becomes a Minister he is unfit to bear a part in Government, if a Metropolitan is unfit in Ecclesiastical matters ; happyly, that political wisdom which shd be in Ministers and the Doctrine which shd be in Metropolitans, is found in full force and equal to all subjects and occasions in every other Man in the Kingdom. If 20000 or 30000 men second these mental powers with strong arms, weilding axes, bludgeons, pickaxes, the administration will be as excellent as the councils are wise. . . . The first news I heard this morning was that a Regiment of Dragons quartered at Newbury were sent for to London in the night. The Framptons have left my House in Hillstreet, but perhaps I give myself airs, and at this time have no House there. God preserve my Friends, as to all other things we who are now the subjects of the Mob must learn to be indifferent. You alarm me greatly for Mr. Burke, he wd be a loss, his Friends could never repair from his virtues and amiabilities, and I wish the Mob wd consider that Nature does not make such a Man once in a Century. Pray write every post no matter for franks. You are the only Person of all our Friends who has had any compassion for our Solicitude on this most serious occasion. I often admire in my fellow creatures how cautiously they avoid doing any kind or civil thing beyond what their friends have a right to exact. A thousand thanks for Mr. Sheridans prologue which is most admirable. I have not any fault to find with the Ode but that it made me recollect most of the Odes I had read for some years past. Assembling a Mob of Odes causes almost as much confusion in the head, as a Mob of rabble does in the streets.

On the 9th Mrs. Vesey wrote :

I am ashamed after beating drum and trumpet and having the pleasure of astonishing you with the great story of civil discord burning houses and Temples forcing the strong Bank of [obliterated] and letting all the stews loose that I am now obliged to tell you the curtain is dropd over all these great achievements and London is now dull and I believe regrets the theme for terror and conversation. I am afraid I have been one of those Gulls that have frightened you, tho I was not frightened personally myself, having neither Person or [obliterated] as the lawyers call it to have tempted either rape or murder. Mr. Thrale has, as I hear, escaped plunder. Ld G. G. is still in town: whether he will give us such another stage play, or act one himself, is doubtful. Ly Clermont goes to Bath tomorrow, from thence to Ireland.

And on the 10th Mrs. Montagu wrote for further news:

Is it true that Lord Mansfield's house at Caen Wood is burnt down? Is it true the Bank was intended to have been plundered by the Mob? We know too well at Newbury that the prisons have poured forth their malefactors, one was taken up yesterday for picking a gentleman's pocket. Mr. Anstey who had called on me a few days ago in his way from Bath to London calld again yesterday on his return. He could only stay to dine with us, but the account he gave of the Mob on Monday was terrible; he had since that time been at Eaton from whence he beheld on Wednesday all London in a blaze. I hope much of that light was illumination in which art the Mobs of Wilkes and [illegible] have made us perfect; those risings taught the mob to command, and we their subjects to obey. Is Ld George Gordon to murder as many men and burn as many houses as he pleases? I dread the bad consequences of the timidity of our Ministers. Flies and spiders may be swept away by a feather broom, but when scorpions invade our apartments a harder brush is necessary. I shall most willingly allow blue flags and no popery to be put on my houses. I have learnt by sad experience that in this Land of Liberty one must illuminate and inscribe and wear the livery imposed not by government indeed but by the ungoverned. I saw Mrs. Poyntz yesterday, she was under uneasy apprehensions for Ld. Sandwich, but indeed every man's life is in danger at such times; a private enemy may take the opportunity to do him mischief.

In a letter, undated, to Mr. Pepys we read:

General Oglethorpe in the restlessness of youth determined to go down to Westminster Hall this morning and engaged Montagu to go with him in apprehension of mob and violence, I am uneasy at this expedition and wish *both* these *young* gentlemen safe at home.

General James Oglethorpe was born in 1698, hence was now 82; he died in 1785. He fought under Marlborough and in 1733 founded the American colony of Georgia. He was a friend of Dr. Johnson and his circle, of whom Boswell has left us many characteristic records. It was to Dr. Johnson that Oglethorpe told the story of his boyhood when as an ensign of fifteen, serving under Prince Eugene, he had met a prince of Würtemberg at table:

"The Prince took up a glass of wine and by a fillip made some of it fly in Oglethorpe's face. Here was a nice dilemma. . . . To have challenged him instantly might have fixed a quarrelsome character on the young soldier; to have taken no notice of it might have been considered as cowardice. Oglethorpe, therefore, keeping his eye upon the Prince and smiling all the time, as if he took what his highness had done in jest, said, 'Mon Prince (I forget the French words he used . . . the purport however was), that's a good joke; but we do it much better in England'; and threw a whole glass of wine in the Prince's face. An old General who sat by said, 'Il a bien fait, mon prince, vous l'avez commencé'; and thus all ended in good humour."

The General Oglethorpe of 1780 had evidently retained much of his boyish pluck and spirits of 1714, and one doesn't wonder that Dr. Johnson, who loved healthy impetuous youth at any age, declared his wish to write his memoirs.

To Mrs. Carter

Will you dine with me to day or tomorrow? or both? you love air, half my windows are broken, and perhaps to night my Lords the Mob will finish the rest. If this goes on I will go and live under the Wing of Despotism for the sake of enjoying Liberty. If the Car of Victory had rattled along the streets I cd have excused the noise, but the shouts without the triumph, oh they make my head and heart ache ! I hope yr cold is better.

The insertion here of the last two extracts is dubious, as there is no evidence that Mrs. Montagu came up from Sandleford to town before the latter half of June.

SANDLEFORD, *June* 15.

I much apprehend there has been at the bottom of this late affair some dark and deep designs. It was hinted to me, some months ago, by more than one person, that perhaps I should see a Revolution in a few months. A gentleman of opposition principles said the other day while the Mob were committing their outrages, that he was shocked at the mischiefs done, and then in a low voice *perhaps it will end in a Revolution.* I answer'd, under such Leaders we must expect excellent measures, and, a well constituted Government, and there we stoppd.

Mrs. Carter in her letter which I received yesterday tells me her eldest Bro^{r}, who is at Bath, informs her that 2 Coaches loaded with Wretches within and on the outside the Coaches arrived there from the London Mob, and had occasiond the Riot there. However if London imparts some of its Rogues to the Country, from the Country we make suitable returns. A fellow near Hungerford who has often been imprisoned for woodstealing but was never 20 miles from home in his life, set out for London on the first news of the riot there, with hopes to make his fortune ; he may I hope accomplish his destiny by getting hanged.

To her Sister

SANDLEFORD, *June 16th.*

Tho I had the comfort of being assured that the riot had subsided, and danger seem'd retreating, both by Travellers who pass'd this way and the publick papers, one can give so little credit to them in their particular relations, that one never considers them as information. . . . Timidity in Governors will ever create rebellion in subjects. I am afraid, indeed convinced, they will not care to lay open the treachery of Persons of consequence, but will content themselves with hanging a few low Wretches who according to the proverb are hardly worth hanging. I am very impatient to see what is the fate of that madly wicked Ld G: G. I wish much that the Law may have always comprehended such acts in its chapter of high Treason. He seems an undegenerate descendant from Adam o' Gordon whose noble deeds in burning a Lady and her Children in their Castle are recorded in an old ballad. The Lady was of the Forbes family, so I congratulate Miss Gregory that she too did not represent her Ancestor in the catastrophe of being burnt, as the other does in the burning character.

Your remark is as full of truth as Witt in regard to Mr. Ansteys [of the New Bath Guide] Muse, and by his amazed and frighted looks when he was here, even in speaking of the past riots in London, I can guess he wd not be much at his ease while the like sports were going on at Bath. It is really shocking to see how combustible the temper of the people is at present ; the Bath riot had not a Ld G: G to foment it, and I am convinced it is zeal for plunder that sets the Mob to work. As to the design to do mischief at Woolwich, that must have had Americans and french for its author. Lady Clermont stopd at Newbury on her way to Bath to take leave of Lady Spencer previous to her going to Ireland ; at Newbury she heard the same outrages were begun at Bath which she thought herself happy to have escaped from in London, she was certainly in the circumstances of not knowing whether to go back or proceed ; however after some hours deliberation she went on to Bath, and I suppose the flames of the Buildings and the fury of the Mob were dying away by the time she arrived.

July 25.

I believe Ld G, Gordon has prevented infinitely more mischief than he has done. I look upon him as a Political conductor, he has brought down the electrical matter which threatend our whole state, and buried under the Gallows what would have levelld our Palaces and Senate Houses, our publick treasurys and Courts of Justice and thrown them open to the Mob, has only broken open our prisons, and demolished some private dwellings. Thus does the mercies of Providence confound the devices of the Crafty. The Cabinet Councils of Princes are not usually composed of great sages, but the Cabinet Counsellors of his Satanick Majesty are much more foolish. Posterity will know more of the late affair than we shall. Some Dalrymple will pull of the patriotick masks and shew villanous faces.

Clinton's successful southern campaign of this summer put new hope into the British stalwarts. "We look upon America as at our feet," Walpole wrote to Mann in July.

To Mrs. Scott

Monday, June 19th.

Tho I rejoyced in the publick news, I lamented the circumstance under which you wrote it. I am not more pleased with the valour of L^d^ Henry Clinton in taking Charles Town [May 12th] than with his humanity in not taking it by storm. I am in great hopes he will put our affairs in America into such a situation that the Congress will no longer be able to prevent their Countrymen from accepting the liberal conditions on which they have been offered peace. I suspect our Mob was intended in some measure to prevent our availing ourselves of the advantages it was expected L^d^ H. Clinton w^d^ obtain for us, and that we must have been constrained to submit the conditions of peace with America on the terms offered by the Congress, the French and Spaniards; the indignation this would have excited must have removed our present Ministers and all in high office. I do not imagine that a twentieth part of the Rioters at the first beginning were at all in the secret, and latterly very few of them had any object but plunder. Furious Mobs, like fireships, may be used, for purposes of which they are not conscious; they are mere machines, and very terrible ones.

To Mrs. Carter

HILLSTREET, *the 27th (June).*

I have been taken up every hour this day, indeed it [has] been not only filled but crammed with business, Stewards, Lawyers, etc etc so that I am really quite exhausted. I will only just tell you the reports of the day. It is said a treasonable correspondence has been carried on wth the Americans and french by Ld G[eorge] G[ordon] by means of one Foster or some such name, that many have been guilty of doing the same. Adl Rowley engaged the whole french fleet, the wind not allowing Rodney and the rest to come to his assistance; the noble Rowley has not suffered more than our Enemies, who ran away as soon as the wind allowd Rodney to come towards them; they did not get to Martinico, and Rodney hopes another brush with them.

The action off Martinique was fought on April 17. Sir Joshua Rowley commanded the rear squadron in the *Conqueror*, and was in the van on the subsequent engagement May 15-19. Rodney had given orders for the whole fleet to attack the French rear ships; but some confusion arose as to the carrying out of the order, which was, of course, in defiance of the Admiralty "van to van" principle of attack, and two of his captains, Carkett and Parker, acting on the official method, spoilt the victory.

To Mrs. Vesey

I am delighted with the spirit of Sr Geo Rodney. There are many future victories in the example of a brave attack. A Nation is perhaps less disgraced, even by a defeat, than by the timorous fear of a battle. The Race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, and a thousand incidents may be urged to excuse the event of an unlucky moment; but cold and timid Councils prevailing thro long deliberations certainly leave a lasting depression on a Fleet or army. . . . Besides the damage done to Mr. de Guichens Fleet the spirit thrown into ours will be of great service. Sr G: Rodney will teach our Sailors not to count noses, and weigh metal. To be exact in weight and tale is very useful in a retail tradesman, but are not the arts by which Victory and glory are attain'd. If his Captains did not support him they will deserve all the punishmt the Law can inflict. I honour and admire Ld Winchelsea; not content with hereditary honours he will have glory of his own, and transmitt to Posterity more lustre than he has received from his Ancestors. How much is he superior to the Maccaroni Crew who dangle at Ladies toilettes in the morning, and flatter at the Opera at night.

"The young Earl of Winchelsea," Walpole wrote in June 1776, "going to Portsmouth to take leave of Captain Fielding, his brother-in-law, embarked with him as a volunteer for America." This was George, the 9th Earl. The Finches were descendants of the Herberts, and amongst the staunchest of Stuart supporters.

The Veseys had gone to spend the summer at Sunning in search of social distraction, haunted by home ennui.

> Mrs. Vesey is more dissipated than a young maccaroni. There is a strange vertigo possesses the present age. It is ever agreeable to see persons in advanced years mix with society, and not plead the privilege of age to avoid performing the little social duties and attentions, but surely to march from 70 to four score in the train of les jeux et les ris is not graceful ; it is time to quit the dancing measure and to leave those to trifle with more grace and ease
>
> Whom folly pleases,
> And whose follies please.
>
> I expect Madame de Vaucluze to dine here today ; she is with a Mrs. Macreth in this neighbourhood. She ran from London for fear of being attacked as a Papist. Lord and Lady Bute received 50 letters one day threatening them and their houses with destruction.

Madame de Vaucluze, above mentioned, had been forced by her mother to take the veil ; on her mother and sister dying of cancer, she besought an uncle to plead her cause with the Pope, who allowed her to break her vows. She was a great genius, but had no common sense. She satirised Madame de Pompadour and had to flee to England to avoid the Bastille. Mrs. Montagu introduced her to Lady Craven, afterwards the Margravine of Anspach, and she became governess to her daughters, the Misses Craven, and lived in a farmhouse near Hampstead Marshall.

There are a number of her letters to Mrs. Montagu in this collection.

To Mrs. Carter

Hillstreet, *July the 6th.*

I went with the Sylph last night into St James's Park to see the warlike tents, and hear the martial musick. The sight was fine, the musick spirited, but the reflection that this array was necessary to keep our fellow citizens from outrage and riot damp'd every pleasure. You would see that the House of Lords has thrown out Sr G: Saviles amendments. It was certainly wrong to comply with the Mob in any degree. The Bill shd not have been touch'd upon at present, but our Patriots are always making motions. The Gazette will have given you an acct of what has been done by Rodney and Guichen. Sr H: Clintons letter of what has pass'd since his former letters give reason to hope 2 of the 13 Colonies will soon return to their Allegiance.

Ld G Gs fate is yet unknown to us, it will be decided it is supposed by the tenor of his letters; they will it is said explain his intentions when he headed the Mob.

Just here enters dear Sylph with the submission of North Carolina, which she pickd up from Mr. Rigby at Bedford House. As her Grace of Bedford is of the opposition he did not say it by way of flattery so we may believe it. The Sylph understood he had the news from his Majesty.

Richard Rigby, the politician and paymaster who contrived to amass nearly half a million of public money, had been secretary to the Duke of Bedford. Mrs. Montagu ought to have known Mr. Rigby too well to believe anything he said, and the less so if it came from Bedford House.

To Leonard Smelt

Sandleford, *July* 24.

If plagues and earthquakes break not Heavens design,
Why then a Borgia or a Cataline?

or even a Lord George Gordon? I begin to think the last of these illustres Scelerats has done more service to his Country than ever a virtuous Patriot has been able to effect by Phlebotomy, scarification, and cautery, his Lordship has wonderfully purged the ill humours of his fellow subjects, and I hope in a great degree cured the epidemical democratick madness. The word petition now obtains nowhere, the word association cannot assemble a dozen people. We are coming to our right senses, and begin to understand that our mild government is preferable to anarchy, and that it is better [to] be subject to our anointed Sovereign than to 10,000 greasy Tallow chandlers, Butchers etc. I consider Lord George as a State electric conductor ; the gathering storm which threatened our strongest, noblest, and most Venerable edifices, has by him been brought down and sunk into the earth before it burst on our heads, he has indeed buried it under the Gallows : if a little of it had fallen on Tower Hill perhaps it had been better, for it would have cleared the upper regions of treasonable matter ; however it is happy that the atmosphere has been purified.

If Mrs. Montagu could have been brought to admit so startling a juxtaposition, one other name might have been added in honourable mention to the King's. John Wilkes entirely disapproved of riots which were not Wilkes' riots, and took an active and courageous part in suppressing Lord George Gordon's, for which he received the particular thanks of the Privy Council.

Our anointed Sovereign's quiet nerve and tenacious courage certainly shone very honourably during the terrible week of the riots. He it was who insisted that if the mob were committing an actual felony and could no other way be stopped, the soldiers must be empowered to fire on them at once without waiting for the Riot Act to be read and the lapse of a vital hour ; and when the Privy Council hesitated to endorse the Attorney-General's approval, declared that if difficulty were shown he would lead his guards in person.

Part of a letter to Mrs. Carter refers to Madame de Sévigné :

Sept. the 12th.

A certain Vicomte de Vibraye, whom the Duke de Nivernois recommended to my acquaintance by a letter, told me his

> Father was in possession of le Chateau de Grignan, he acquired it by purchase for he was not related to the family. From him I learnt that Madme de Sevignes grave in the chapel at Grignan was not distinguish'd by any mark or inscription ; but her own pen has written her character on every mind capable of recieving impressions of virtue, and of witt. She was surely the most amiable of Women. I read her letters with sympathy as well as admiration. I am interested in every circumstance that relates to her. I received the account of le Chateau de Grignans being pull'd down from some french Persons who pretended to be well inform'd. I am glad they were mistaken, if the Castle was demolishd, I shd fear the sacred Tomb in the Chapel might be sufferd to perish. I am surprized that you had not till lately seen the last publication of Madme Sevignes letters, I am told that the Grand Daughter, of whose character you speak with just contempt, had a great jealousy of Madme de Sevigne's fame as a letter writer.

Though motor cars and road hogs were yet a century off, the young folk of 1780 seem to have been active enough, if we are to judge by the following from one who was herself something of a vagrant :

> The present fashion is to be running about the streets of London all the winter, and scampering thro' the turnpike roads all the summer, as if the way to be happy was never to be at rest. The young ladies are in good training for ballad singers in the streets, and the young gentlemen for couriers and post-boys.

From a long letter about family affairs from her sister-in-law Mrs. William Robinson (of Denton Court, Kent) we gather that her brother the Recorder of Canterbury had "carried his election in a very honourable manner with no expense but what was perfectly legal, and I believe not much of that neither"; Sir Horace Mann and Mr. Oxenden were stewards at the races, and her niece was said to dance a good minuet. "We had the head of a College dined with us on Thursday who set out that evening in order to reach Cambridge on Saturday to give his interest for Mr. Pitt, who is under his care and whom he speaks of as a promising young gentleman." And William Pitt did not altogether belie his tutor's forecast !

The following extract was sent to Mrs. Climenson by a friend who had come across it amongst old family papers, and may be introduced here as illustrating one contemporary view of the characters of Mrs. Montagu and her learned friend at Deal, and also as showing the pabulum on which the younger Pitt was nurtured as a boy of eleven, ten years previously.

Extract of a letter from Doctor Wilson to Mr. Pitt when 11 years old, Dr. Wilson was tutor to Mr. Pitt, and some other great men.

(After praising some essay of Mr. Pitt's writing and requesting him to continue to write, he goes on thus :)

What think you of bringing Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Carter on this charming theatre ? The similarity of those Ladies Characters in some points, and their dissimilarity in others, would be finely pourtrayed by your pen and might give you an opportunity of determining the just merits and standard of a literary female : The *One* is an highly instructive accomplished Woman possessed of great affluence, who endulges herself in a chaste display of fashionable as well as literary Elegance, makes her Drawing Room the Lyceum of the day, maintains a luxurious hospitality for the Votaries of that Science which she loves, and patronises the learning which She has herself adorned. The *Other* in a state of Mediocrity is humble as if she knew nothing, While She is not only the most learned Woman of any age but one of the most learned Persons of that in which She lives : The pure sublime Genius which never swerves from Virtue, accompanied her in the paths of rigid Discretion and is contented to slumber while its favorite Votary is employed in the Daily habitual exercise of domestic Duties. This Colloquy should take place between Justice, accompanied by Vanity, enforcing Reward, and merit attended by modesty, who will scarce suffer an acceptance. They may be made to contend, not for their own, but each other's Genius and Virtues, and the Scene may conclude with a well decorated Notice of that handsome Independance which the former has attached to the Valuable life of the latter. This, in your hands will form a most entertaining, instructive and exemplary Picture, etc.

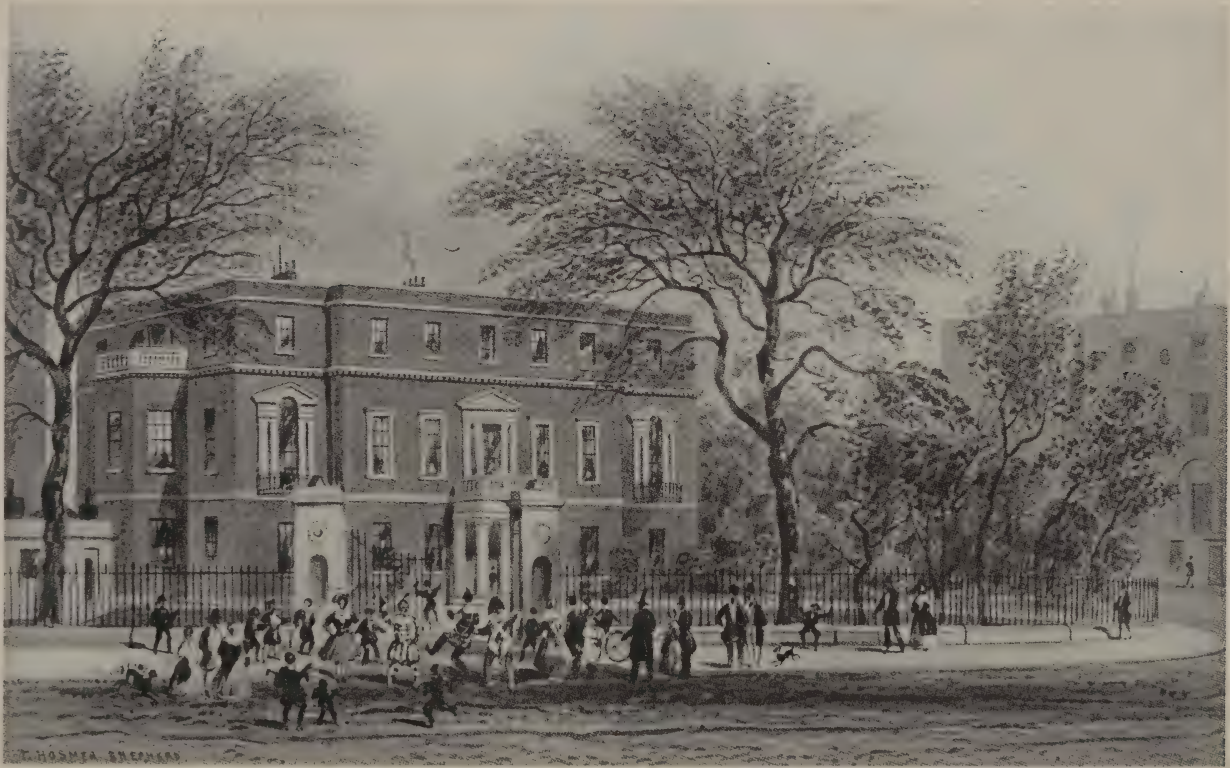
In a letter to her sister, of August 13, is the record of a three days' circular tour from Shooter's Hill:

> I left Shooters Hill as soon as breakfast was over on monday, went to Portman Square to see how things were going on, paid entirely for all that has yet been done, and gave drafts of credit on my Banker for a great deal yet unfinish'd, so that some of my artists are my Debtors, none my creditors; but where the materials are expensive, or the work tedious, I think it is reasonable to pay in part before the things are compleat. As soon as these matters were dispatch'd I set out for Mrs. Boscawens at Richmond, and arrived there a quarter before 4 o'clock. The evening was very fine, and favoured our walk in her pretty garden and grounds; this was enjoy'd again on tuesday morning, in the evening we went to Lady Juliana Penns, where we met Mad^{me} de Boufler, Mr. Walpole, and many persons of the great World. On wednesday morning I breakfasted with my Friend old Mrs. Boscawen, and in the evening got home. To begin the day in the Society of a good and agreable Friend, and conclude it at a pleasant home, makes a happy day.

The Portman Square house was now practically completed, and "Hermes" Harris (only a month or so before his death) writes with truly magnificent imagery:

> I am to inform you I have seen an Edifice, which for the time made me imagine I was at Athens, in a House of Pericles, built by Phidias.
>
> Where my Reverie ended, I felt a more solid satisfaction of reflecting, that, in my own Country, the Genius of Phidias, could still produce an Architect, and the Genius of Pericles still produce a Patroness.

By the courtesy of the late Lord Portman, I was shown all the principal rooms of Mrs. Montagu's building last year; but having quoted Mr. James Harris's eulogy, any comment I could add must be in the nature of bathos. It is a fine, roomy, substantial


T. HOSMER SHEPHERD

MONTAGU HOUSE, PORTMAN SQUARE
By T. Hosmer Shepherd

house of its period, well contrived for the entertainment of a host of friends. The decorations have of course been long since altered and renewed, but the scagliola pillars and the painted ceilings and door heads, the carved marble mantels and other ornamentation, survive ; and, whilst deprecating comparisons between Stuart and Phidias—or Mrs. Montagu and Pericles, for that matter !—one could imagine that the great Blue Stocking would be very becomingly domiciled there, and that her assemblies would gather bravely in its spacious reception rooms.

Of its cost she writes again this autumn to Mrs. Carter :

> I believe many of my Friends have been afraid my great House sh^{d} be an inconvenience to my purse. When I began it we had not a French and Spanish War, and money was not scarce, and I had great reason to hope to sell my House in Hill Street ; the money it was to bring me I always intended sh^{d} go towards defraying the expence of the new House. However, I accomodated my expences to the times, and such are the resourses of economy that from the first of Jan^{y} 1775 to the 1st of Jan^{y} 1780 I had only exceeded my income, taking the 5 years together, only a total of eight hundred pounds one shilling and two pence and my House was then paid for as far as it was advanced. I hope from the year 80 to 81 I shall not be above £200 beyond my income and my House still paid for as far as finished. Mr. Montagu's legacies, funeral expences, the large expence of Mourning, which a Person who has so many House Servants and dependants as y^{r} H^{ble} Servant I do not put into the account, they are a just charge on the whole property, neither do I reckon the expence of Surveyers and Lawyers on my new purchase in Northumberland into my personal expences ; I consider them as part of the purchase. I have also bought the Leases of some ground for my garden in Portman Square that I consider also as no debt incurred, the equivalent remaining to my Heirs. Within the annual income of the 5 years I have paid all my Expences of every kind, paid the Workmen at my new House for what was done in the five years, and also paid for a service of plate and renew^{d} a fine with the Bishop of Durham for certain things which are held of him.

The new Northumberland purchase was Kendal mines and property, adjoining Denton, which cost her £30,000; the fine to the Bishop of Durham was rental of coal mines belonging to him and worked by her.

On October 2, Elizabeth Montagu reached the age of sixty. She had long, though quite insincerely, been referring to herself as an old woman, and lecturing Mrs. Vesey on the serenities of *la vieillesse*; but as a matter of fact she was still remarkably active, physically and mentally. Delicate constitutionally she had always been; but a woman who, in spite of chronic stomachic troubles, could personally administer large houses and households in London, at Sandleford and Denton, farms in Yorkshire and Berkshire, and collieries in Northumberland; could regularly travel the often abominable roads between London, Tunbridge, Bath, Sandleford, and Newcastle; could entertain largely and continuously and pay a succession of visits to country houses; could carry on an immense correspondence whilst forced to write in the most uncomfortable position; could read constantly, make many calls, attend drawing-rooms, and conduct a large amount of business and accounts connected with her mines, estates, and building, could hardly as yet complain seriously of the inroads of decrepitude. Frail in looks and constitution she must have been, but the vivacity and spirit, which Conyers Middleton had done so much to develop in her childhood, still supported her natural energy of character, and still triumphed over physical ailments and advancing years.

To Mr. Pepys

I hear that Mr. Moisey gave you a splendid ball. On friday my young folks went to a Ball at the Mansion House at Newbury where all the Misses in the Town display'd the terrible graces of the Minouets. A tradesmans daughter call'd for le minouet de la Cour ; should you have expected to find the vanities of Versailles in a shop at Newbury ? Then for the dresses Mambrino's Helmet was a mere scullcap compared to some of the Misses caps, the Gorgons would have hid their diminished heads, had they beheld the wondrous edifices of curled hair and feathers on some of the fair blouzelindas. The Taylors Daughter majestically saild her minouet in a Sultana, her Mother looking with ecstasy on her Daughters air and shape, she herself only dress'd in a Circassian robe and a Queen's night cap on her head. I believe there was as much folly in the World in the last century as now, but then the follies fitted those who wore them, they were shaped and fashion'd to each degree and character. Tho formerly for fools it was thought *motley was the only wear*, Vanity has overuled and establish'd an uniform for all ranks ages and characters, and with distinctions of dress many moral and civil distinctions are lost. The Newbury Misses caps and garments have led me into reflections too serious for a letter, but levities naturally are attended with great consequences, so I lay the blame on the nature of things, and take it off from myself.

" Blouzalinda " was the unromantic milkmaid of Gay's *Shepherd's Week*. Mr. Webster assures me that a " Sultane " was a " kind of gown trimmed with buttons and loops," which I fear my lady readers will consider a very masculine description. " Circassian " was a mixture of wool and cotton. A " queen's nightcap " is beyond my research.

I am more and more in love with my new House. When a fog obscures Hillstreet there is a blue sky and a clear atmosphere in Portman Square, and then for my dwelling it is so convenient and cheerful as a place of retirement, so ample for the devoirs of Society, and so calculated for Assemblies that it will suit all ones humours, and adapt itself to all ones purposes. I congratulate myself every hour on having taken the trouble to build for myself. I do not know whether the news paper mentioned that Montagu carried the prize the other day for an english declamation ; as he has been so short a time at the University, and had many young Men of distinguished characters for his competitors, you may imagine I am not a little pleased with his success.

But Mrs. Montagu's architectural ambitions were not confined to Portman Square; and we find her writing to Mr. Pepys this October from Sandleford:

> I had the satisfaction of settling with Mr. Wyatt on Friday last the plan for two charming rooms he is to make me here. The largest will be forty feet long and in due proportions of heighth and breadth, the South windows will command a very rich and gay prospect, and will give me all the splendours of a Summer when I am inclined to the allegro; when I am more disposed to the penseroso, those windows may be shut against the garish day and a large gothick window be thrown open.

Mr. Pepys had just moved to Bath, and was rejoicing in the society of Mr. Thomas Bowdler (of "Family Shakespeare" fame) and his family, to whom Mrs. Montagu had introduced him.

Young Matthew Montagu had now left Harrow and gone up to Cambridge.

In October she went from Sandleford for the autumn visit to Bath which Dr. Moisey had exacted from her; and the presence of some special friends made her sojourn there much more enjoyable than that of the spring had been. Amongst these were her beloved Primate (the Archbishop of Armagh) and his brother Sir William, Mrs. Carter and the Penningtons, Mr. Yorke (Lord Hardwicke's brother), the Bowdlers, and Mr. Sheridan. Her nephew Matthew, entered this term as a gentleman commoner of Trinity College, Cambridge, greatly pleased his aunt by dutiful reports of his studies and establishment. On December 7 George Lewis Scott, her sister's husband, died. Sarah Scott and he had long been separated, and gone their several ways, but these letters do not reveal their story. Mrs. Scott was, intrinsically, an old maid; afflicted by terrible headaches, clever with her pen, and somewhat caustic with her tongue. Her surviving letters to her sister are many of them admirable gossip, and besides *Millenium Hall* she did a good deal of translation. All her papers were destroyed on her death at Catton near Norwich in 1795; and as she had a large circle of distinguished acquaintance during her life at Bath-Easton and Catton, and was herself by no means devoid of wit and humour, many useful links in our story are lost. Scott was a fine personable man, a brilliant mathematician and one of the preceptors of George III., though at one time suspect of Jacobinism. Mrs. Montagu, it will be remembered, reported him to her sister at some ceremony in 1779 as "Your Spousey looking fat and well"; and it seems pretty clear that the marriage was a mistake, and the separation a success, for both.

The following letter from Dr. James Johnstone, the old friend and physician of the Lyttelton family, recalls the event which had happened in the previous November, but to which no detailed reference has come to light in this correspondence—namely, the sudden death of Tom, the "wicked" second Lord Lyttelton. So tragic a happening to a man for whom Mrs. Montagu retained a deep and melancholy interest cannot have passed without much comment, and there is little doubt that letters referring to it have been removed from the collection.

Without attempting here to pursue further the story of the convenient and secluded Pitt Place, Epsom (which Lord Lyttelton the second greatly preferred to Hagley, where, he said, "I might die of *ennui* before anything like the necessary remedy could be found"), or of its lady guests, whom Horace Walpole did not scruple to describe (quite inaccurately) as "four girls picked up in the Strand," Dr. Johnstone's letter to Mrs. Montagu is here in part transcribed as giving the considered verdict of one who knew his Lordship and his history very intimately.

From Dr. J. Johnstone

? 6 June.

I was indeed exceedingly shocked by Ld Lyttelton's sudden death, and felt particularly on that occasion that I loved him more than I was before aware off. He certainly began to shew some signs of amendment, some regard to principle before he died : If his Lady could have been reconciled to have lived with him again, I think she might have had a favourable influence over him : the seeds of a good education, too much choaked, began to shoot up to some strength. I remember often to have talked and even disputed with him on the foundations of natural religion, and along with his ever beloved and revered Father, to have endeavoured to answer the objections he made to the existance of God—from talking in this strange manner he passed afterwards into a profession of Deism—to which of late he added a better opinion of the Christian System—whatever might be his real religious persuasion, he certainly was not free from superstition. His dream was truly extraordinary, altho' it might not be impossible to give some probable account of it as originating from what he feard and loved, viz. Death and Women, strangely jumbled in his sleep, And, tho' his death (which I believe was occasioned by a Spasm in the Glottis, the narrow entrance of the windpipe), might have been hastened by his apprehensions, yet I think the whole, however considered and accounted for, must fairly be reckoned one of those striking warnings which sometimes are given by that great Being who bestows all life, and withdraws it at his pleasure. . . . The shock occasioned in Lord Lyttelton's feeble nervous worn out constitution by his Vision perhaps acted as a cause of his death. I think it is probable it did so. . . . Your faithful most obedient and obliged Servant

J. JOHNSTONE.

Dr. Johnstone in a later letter speaks of the late Lord Lyttelton as "infinitely variable ; another Villiers Duke of Buckingham, everything by turns and nothing long," and thinks he had in all probability something of insanity in his frame, but that possibly if his deserted wife had made a second effort to live with and to redeem him she might have succeeded.

In this Mrs. Montagu did not agree, being a little sceptical about the reformation of rakes.

It is pleasantly remarkable that it should be from the pious and estimable Mrs. Carter that we have perhaps the shrewdest and truest estimate of Lyttelton's character :

> With great abilities, generally very ill applied ; with a strong sense of religion which he never suffered to influence his conduct, his days were mostly passed in "splendid misery," and in the painful alternations of the most extravagant gaiety, and the deepest despair—The delight when he pleased of the first and most select society, he chose to pass his time for the chief part with the most profligate and abandoned of both sexes. Solitude was to him the most unsupportable torment, and to banish reflection he fled to company he despised and ridiculed.

The year's letters close with references to the death of Dr. John Fothergill, the Quaker philanthropist, who had been Mrs. Montagu's friend and adviser of many years ; to Mr. Vesey, who "avails himself of the sick man's privilege to be peevish, while she exceeds the wife's duty to be officious" ; and to Mr. Thrale, of whom the accounts encourage neither great hopes nor immediate fears.

1781

MOVING INTO MONTAGU HOUSE— JOHNSON'S *LIVES*, CHATTERTON, WILKES

Spring visit to Bath. Alterations at Sandleford. The Octagon Room. Dr. Johnson's *Lives*; Letter from Lord Hardwicke. The "Emperor of Germany." Mrs. Garrick and Hannah More at Bath. The Whisky. Montagu House, Portman Square, finished. The move from Hill Street. A family dinner. Workmen and fittings. Rowley's Poems. Disposing of the Hill Street house. Miss Pulteney.

THE makers of books continued amongst Mrs. Montagu's most faithful and solicitous correspondents.

February of this year brought another letter from Robert Potter, who was completing his translation of Euripides and begged for her interest with the Primate as a patron; and in March came one from Dr. Benjamin Kennicott, the great Hebraist and biblical scholar, offering his edition of the Hebrew Bible.

At the end of this month an attack of her "spasms" drove Mrs. Montagu again to Bath; whence a prophetic sentence to Mrs. Vesey, "Mr. Thrale is much recovered but indulges so much in the luxuries of the table he will bring on a relapse," foretold precisely what happened with fatal result at Streatham in the early morning of April 4—just a week later.

The new building work at Sandleford, mentioned last autumn, by which James Wyatt was to convert the old monk's chapel of the Priory into a spacious dining-hall, was put in hand this spring, and finished in June:

On the Thursday after you left London we set out for Sandleford, when I found Mr. Wyat had converted the gloomy

Chapel into a charming room and with such expedition that it is now quite compleat and fit for use. The Walls of the Octagon room are erected and the Roof will in a few days be so far compleated as to defend one from rain as one passes from the House to the new eating room. Mr. Brown is to come to me the middle of July in order to lead the View from the East window of the Eating room

Through arched roof of twilight Groves,
And Shadows brown that Sylvan loves.

The new dining-room was connected with the main building by this Octagon Room, an extremely elegant drawing-room with classical adornment, which still remains almost exactly as Mrs. Montagu left it. "I think," she writes to Mrs. Vesey, "my reformed chapel—for what has been taken from the owls, the bats, the rats and mice, to be dedicated to the sober use of sober society and a temperate dinner, preceded and concluded by a grace, may rather be esteemed reformed and purified than polluted and debased—looks cheerful and pleasant from the windows, and within very comfortable from a large fire." The blue tiling to complete the Octagon Room was long in coming, but

Mr. Wyat's delay does not extend to the eating room in which we have dined constantly for these ten days, and such are its charms, that a leg of mutton in that room is preferable to a Haunch of venison in any other almost that I know; my barn door fowl eaten there is more delicate than le coq de Bruyère, and my pigeons are preferable to ortolans, and I am sure all my geese will be swans, when Mr. Brown has improved the little river which divides Admiral Derby's territory and mine.[1]

The following letter from Lord Hardwicke heralds the storm which swept the coterie and the friends of the first Lord Lyttelton on the publication of the final series of Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. To avoid the disjointed references in the chronological sequence of the Letters the whole rather laughable story of this terrible affray has been brought together in the paper on Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Montagu, which precedes the year 1784, in which the Doctor died.

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[1] Admiral Darby was her neighbour at Newtown.

From Lord Hardwicke

St. James's Square, *Feb. 20th.*

I beg leave to send you the unpublished vol. of Dr. Johnson which contains Lord Lyttelton's life ; a more unfair and uncandid account I never read, *and he* (the Dr.), deserves to be severely chastised for it. I have perused some other memoirs of Akenside, Dyer, &c., all in the same style. The man's head is turned from the pay of booksellers, and the puffs of some literary circles.

There is another vol. which takes in the lives above refered to ; Mallet is the last I have nothing to say for but Ld L—tons character I will support to the last.

P.S.—Thompson is as ill-treated as his patron Lord Lyttelton, and probably on his account.

From her Sister

The Man who keeps the Bear Inn at Bath received last week a letter (anonymous I suppose, at least in effect) acquainting him that the Emperor of Germany arrived at Exeter on such a day, had been at Ld Courtenayes and Sr —— Acklands, and wou'd on such a day be at Bath, and intended to take up his Lodging at his house. The Man informed the Corporation, they consulted together on the proper manner of receiving him, clubbd all their wisdom in the composition of a Speech proper to address him, brushd up their Catskin'd Gowns, and kept themselves in readiness to sally forth in due compliment as soon as they heard of his approach ; the Roads and streets which were in the road from Exeter were crouded with an expecting multitude, when behold he arrived in the shape of a Horse, being no other than a Racer so named, whose name had given opportunity to some facetious personage to hum the Town in this manner. It was a little hard on the Inn Keeper who I suppose must have collected provisions at considerable expence and labour ; as for the expence of genius to which the Corporation had been put, one hopes they are so well stocked as not to miss it out of their store, Mayors and Aldermen being generally well provided. It really put the Town into a very great bustle, but no harm in that, for it is now a very dull time there, anything that cou'd faire sensation was a benefit. He is such a Traveller that when we read in the papers that he was arrived in England we were inclind to believe it, but spent no little time in wondering what coud induce him to land on the Western shore.

To Mrs. Carter

BATH, *June 27th.*

Mrs. Garrick and Miss More dined with me when Mrs. Garrick passd thro Bath in the way to London. Poor Woman she burst into a flood of tears at coming into this House where she had often enjoyd the company of Mr. Garrick. Miss More kindly went with her as far as Marlbro, On Saturday we are to go to Bristol to spend the day with Miss More.

SANDLEFORD, *July 14th.*

Before I return'd to this place I passed a most agreable day with Miss Hannah More and her three sisters, they are all Women of admirable sense and unaffected behaviour and I should prefer their school to any I have ever seen for girls, whether very young or Misses in their Teens. Our amiable Mrs. Garrick is gone back to Hampton.

I have been most comfortably well all this summer. I took an airing of about 17 miles yesterday morning in a *one horse chair* of the construction of Sir Richard Jebb who had the goodness to bespeak it for me. It is a most delightful machine in fair weather.

This carriage was called "a Whisky," quite a new vehicle then, and Miss Gregory drove Mrs. Montagu daily when fine over the commons near Newbury.

Of the Portman Square house, of which she was preparing to take possession this autumn, she writes the following apologia, which helps to illustrate her later character :

I consider my new House as a Palais de la veillesse, I have endeavourd to give it a sort of splendid comfortableness, which should render it pleasing to visitants while it is convenient to the inhabitant. Young people delight, and are delighted, everywhere ; I am arrived at an age at which it is no easy matter perhaps to avoid the contempt of the World, and ones own inward dissatisfaction. A certain dignity of appearance to the publick, and elegant accomodations for ones private enjoyment may in some degree avert these evils ; and while there are many publick buildings dedicated to diversions and pleasure, many private Houses where every species of luxury and intemperance spread their snares and offer luscious bates to the young and unwary, it is right that Virtue, prudence, and Temperance, should sometimes keep open House, and shew there is a golden mean between churlish severity of manners and lean and sallow abstinence in diet ; and indecent gayety of behaviour, and that *swinish gluttony which n'er looks to Heav'n midst its gorgeous feast but crams and blasphemes its feeder.*

The actual move-in from Hill Street took place in December, and was naturally accompanied by a considerable upset of the domestic menage :

Tomorrow I am to go into the city to choose some lamps for my hall. I hope by the end of the week the wishes of my housekeeper, the caprices of my laundry maid, the fancies of my housemaids, the demands of my cook, and the accomodations of my Butler, will all be fulfilled, compleated, and answered, and I assure you they make a total of no small significance. A Betty Tulls working apparatus is but a feather on the camel's back yet it adds to the load ; tho' I have not denied requests I have endeavoured to stop complaints, for I find if I did not discourage them I should be plagued to death, for servants love to give significance to trifles.

A family dinner took place in the middle of the month by way of a preliminary house-warming :

" The mind is its own place," says the great Milton ; the mind is its own place, says the little Elizabeth Montagu . . . I know not whether your nurse ever told you a long story of a little woman who lived in a vinegar bottle. Mine did. I was rather disposed to feel a contempt for her, but I have done her more justice since Tuesday, and believe I may think as highly of her as I do of your humble servant in her great house. . . . We were all very cheerful and well pleased, but I did not observe that we eat more venison and partridge than we used to do in a room of more moderate dimensions, nor did the wine receive any peculiar zest because the sideboards were placed under beautiful scagliola pillars betwixt which hung the most beautiful and brilliant lustres.

Mrs. Montagu had evidently discovered — as others have often done—that the only way to get workmen out of your new house is to take possession of it yourself. But the process was a little deafening. To Mrs. Carter she writes on Christmas Eve:

You are more le ton at Bath than we are in London. We have not of late given so illustrious examples of a contempt of the 5th and 7th commandment. I pity Dr. Woodcock more than Mr. B; conjugal love may be dissolved in every respect, paternal never. Mrs. Chapone and Mesdames Burrows's dined with me yesterday. Ld and Lady Dartrey and Ld Shelburne and I hope Mrs. Fielding (but have not yet had an answer from her to my card) are to dine with me on thursday. It wd be most inhuman to ask anyone to breakfast with me, but the workmen leave off as soon as daylight retires. They and I shall have holydays next week. The drums of my ears will find great relief in silence. The Bishop of Durham and Miss Boughton are I believe really going to be married. . . . I think you will read with great pleasure what Mr. Bryant has written on the subject of Rowleys poems, his investigations shew wonderful sagacity, but what does him most honour is the generosity with which he has acted towards Chattertons family, on whom he bestows the whole profit of the publication. . . . I am sure you were rejoyced that Lady Frances Coningesby was so happily released from her sufferings. Her death was sudden and without agony. Ld Malden inherits about £8000 a year from her. Mr. Walsingham is her Executrix and Residuary Legatee, and it is thought will get about £40,000. Ld Salisbury is embellishing Hatfield in the most noble and elegant manner. He has given out 1000 tickets for a Ball there in the Xmas week. I know you will be glad to hear my health is not impaired by all the fatigues I have undergone. The Duchess of Portland and Mrs. Delany are come to Town in perfect health, they arrived on friday.

It was now eleven years since Thomas Chatterton —not yet eighteen—"the marvellous boy, the sleepless soul that perish'd in his pride," had taken leave of a world that did not care to keep him, in his lonely Holborn attic; yet there remained many "wild adherents" who still believed him merely the transcriber of old Rowley. Jacob Bryant, Fellow of King's and resident at Blenheim, and the Dean of Exeter were among those who clung staunchly to the antiquity of the poems.

Lord Malden, afterwards fifth Earl of Essex, assumed the name of Coningsby on inheriting the estates of his maternal grandmother, the Countess of Coningsby. He had, according to Horace Walpole's journal of this February, been first favourite with the Prince of Wales, to whom he had introduced "Perdita," Mrs. Robinson, but "both were disgraced on pretence of Lord Malden's intriguing with her himself, which was well founded."

For John Wilkes, of the shocking fraternity of Medmenham, the ally of Churchill, the writer of the *North Briton*, the butt of Hogarth's envenomed pencil, the printer of Thomas Potter's outrageous *Essay on Woman*, it was not to be supposed that Mrs. Montagu would have anything but hard words; to Wilkes as Martin's duellist and the people's idol, imprisoned, wounded, persecuted, outlawed, and to Wilkes fêted and triumphant, member of Parliament, alderman sheriff and Lord Mayor of London, she had become serenely indifferent. But the later Wilkes, the calm and peaceful democrat, the friend of liberty who protested he was "never a Wilkite"; reconciled with the King, *tête-à-tête* with Dr. Johnson, devoted to the worthy editing of Catullus and Theophrastus, welcoming young Nelson to the freedom of the city—this was quite another matter. The whirligig of time brought its revenges, and amongst them Wilkes's daughter became her respected friend, and John

Wilkes himself was an invited guest to the first reception at Montagu House.

The Hill Street house had not yet been disposed of, though much viewed and enquired after, and its owner, having done her flitting, and settled herself in Montagu House, waxes a little caustic on the subject:

> Lady Lothian had a great desire to purchase my House; as they did not want it till May I was very desirous they shd, but a Gentleman who is gone abroad with another Mans Wife (having left his own in the Country) offering a House in St. James Square; another Lady being caught in adultery, the establishment of her family therefore broken up, that is to be disposed of; and Ld Villiers run away for debt, leaving a fine House in Grosvenor Square to be lett, Ld Lothian seems inclined to one of these Houses; and indeed Lady Lothian, who is the best of Women, is a proper person to exorcise them; so my House, which has never broken any of the ten commandments, must wait till these Temples of Satan are disposed of.

The proposal to place the rather intractable daughter of the Pulteneys under French convent tutelage did not at all appeal to Mrs. Montagu:

> I heartily wish that Miss P may find herself more disposed to obey a stranger than to obey her Parents, for undoubtedly the Stranger has not so much authority and power as the Parent. It was told me that she wd sometimes go out in the evening in the Coach against her Mothers will. Surely Mrs. Pulteney cd make her Coachman obedient if she could not make her Daughter dutiful, I should as soon let a girl buy a Cork jacket, to swim across the Thames, as let her order my Coach to carry her out at an improper time, or to an improper place. I suppose there may be many reasons, which did not present themselves to me, to try extraordinary measures to counteract the sad effects of such indulgence as this poor Child has been treated with. I heartily wish all possible success to the scheme, but I own I have more confidence in Pulteneys good sense and firmness at last working upon the young Ladys little caprices, than any other means of subduing them.

1782

A CAPABLE WIDOW—BRITISH PRESTIGE RESTORED BY THE NAVY AND GIBRALTAR

Gloomy political outlook. The Ministry resign. Lord Rockingham returns. Pitt at the Exchequer. Warton on Pope. Fête for Prince of Wales. Texier's readings. Mrs. Garrick's grief. Influenza. Sir Richard Jebb. Delights of the new house. Cipriani's commode. Second marriages. A capable widow. Lord Rockingham's death. Miss Burney's *Cecilia*. Haymakers' feast. Lord Shelburne First Lord. Life at Sandleford. Lancelot Brown. Bad harvest. Mr. Vesey. Rousseau. Miss Gregory goes to Edinburgh. Miss Pulteney sent to a convent. Lord Bath's estate. Howe and Rodney. Prince of Wales at Lady Lucan's. Gibraltar. Potter's *Euripides*. The Cameo. Death of Lord Kames.

Politically, the year 1782 opened gloomily enough, and it was not now Mrs. Vesey alone who began to despair of the country, and see ruin imminent. The capitulation of Cornwallis to Washington at York Town had practically ended the American War. The news had fallen like a thunderbolt, and Lord North, pacing wildly up and down his room, threw up his arms, exclaiming " It is all over." Ireland asserted her independence. Spain demanded the surrender of Gibraltar as the price of peace. France proposed that England should retain Bengal alone of her Indian conquests. De Bouillé had retaken Rodney's captured St. Eustatia ; Demerara, Essequibo, and St. Kitts were lost ; our attack at the Cape of Good Hope was frustrated, and Minorca surrendered.

Mrs. Montagu was, as has already been said, very little of a politician. Her interests were largely personal, and she numbered amongst her friends prominent people on both sides in Parliament. She was very comfortably settled in her great new house, and was entertaining regularly there during this winter and spring. To her dear Sylph in Ireland she reports that Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Barbauld, whose boys' school at Palgrave and children's hymns were already famous ; Dr. Warton, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and other "valuable friends, agreeable and polite people, learned men and ingenious women," were dining at her table ; and on March 20,

> between the time of the dessert and the coffee one of my guests had a note from a considerable person in the H. of Commons, who also has a considerable place ; it was this : "we are all out." Lord North informed the house that his Majesty had resolved on forming a new administration, so the house adjourned to Monday next. It is generally believed Lord Shelbourne, Lord Gower and the Duke of Grafton are to come in.

The general anticipation as to the new ministry which was to take the place of Lord North's was not, however, to be immediately verified. The King would probably have chosen Lord Shelburne, but it was felt that Shelburne was not, whatever his virtues, a heaven-born leader, and that Rockingham, the repealer of the Stamp Act, whom George had snuffed out of office sixteen years before, was the likeliest of the Whigs—since Whigs it must be—to command a following in Parliament. So Rockingham was most unwillingly sent for. Shelburne and Fox became Secretaries of State, Burke Paymaster-General, but without a seat in the Cabinet, and Sheridan an under-secretary, whilst young William Pitt, though only twenty-three, declined the offer of a minor post,—and found himself Chancellor of the Exchequer within four or five months.

> As I am not consulted upon these occasions I do not think it necessary to declare my opinion. I shall chatt away to you

on matters more on my level. Pray have you read Dr. Wartons 2d vol on the writings etc of Mr. Pope. The depth of judgment and learning, the candor of his observations, make this work the most perfect contraste of Johnsons criticisms that can be imagined. The Muses guided the pen of Dr. Warton, the furies the porcupine quill of Johnson. There is too, just published, a most ingenious work of our friend Mr. Soame Jenyns entitled disquisitions on several subjects. . . . There is a grand Fete preparing for the Prince of Wales at Devonshire House for next thursday. Mrs. Hubbard had an Assembly one night ; the cards of invitation held forth the following conditions, no husband to bring his Wife, or Wife her Husband, or young lady her Chaperon ; the Prince of Wales was wished for, hoped for, expected, but to his honour did not come. If there was such a place for a Woman as Mistress of the Revels in the modern sense of the word, Mrs. Hubbard would seem perfectly qualified for it.

I had the pleasure of dining in company with Ld Bristol at Miss Herveys, and they are to dine with me on Wednesday. Texier read one night at Harcourt House, one night at Mr. T: Pitts, another night here. We had each 10 subscribers on our list ; the 26th., I am to have a set of my own appointing 30 in number for 3 readings, one in a week. My eating room makes a delightful Theatre. Ld and Lady Harcourt, Mr. Walpole, Lady Clermont and many of your friends are on my list of subscribers to le Texier. I expect the Burkes to dine with me on saturday. Mrs. Garrick and Miss More dined with me the other day ; poor Mrs. Garrick struggles with grief but cannot subdue it. Have you read Miss Mores sacred Dramas and her poem on sensibility.

Hannah More and Mrs. Garrick were the closest of friends, and the description by the former of her visit to the widow at the Adelphi just after Garrick's death is one of the very best of her letters. With the summer came a severe epidemic of influenza, which carried off Lord Rockingham on July 1, only three months after his appointment as Prime Minister.

" I was last night at Mrs. Delany," she writes to Mrs. Carter, " who enquired much after you. I am to have Mrs. Ord and several of your acquaintance tomorrow if the influenza does not interpose, but at present it is impossible to form any scheme for tomorrow with any degree of confidence. Every hour some person in a family falls ill, some of my servants are getting well of the disorder, others falling ill of it; thank God it is not a dangerous illness but the most universal I ever knew."

Having had a return of her periodic spasms, she now took the precaution of calling in Sir Richard Jebb.

Sir Richard says the influenza has changed its character within these few days and the disorder is of the inflamatory kind. Montagu has had it, and it has been very bad in Cambridgeshire. My tenants and black subjects in Northumberland are very sickly, and I have lost several horses belonging to the colliery. . . .

Fresh paint at Sandleford kept her in town till July, but the delights of Montagu House were some compensation:

I must tell you this is no unpleasant habitation even in summer. The moon shines with all her majesty into my eating room and at night I send away the candles to take a moonlight walk in it. As to the fair Gregory she delights in seeing the setting sun play on the grand lustre while we sit there in the afternoon, for as it looks upon the Hampstead hills we spend a great deal of our time there. . . . Cipriani has painted four muses on the commode in my dressing room in his very best manner tho' he has given the mien of the graces to the spirited and lively physionomy of the favourites of the God of wit.

Of the second marriage of a mutual friend Mrs. Montagu writes to Mrs. Carter with a touch of satire:

I always thought her the perfection of the female character, formed to become the domestick situation and disposed to obedience. She could not stir till she received the word of command. I really believe she was just like Eve before she eat the apple, at least she answers to Milton's description of her. She would have preferred her husband's discourse to the angels. I am afraid you and I my dear friend should have entered into some metaphysical disquisitions with the angel, we are not so perfectly the rib of man as woman ought to be. We can think for ourselves, and also act for ourselves. When a wife I was obedient because it was my duty, and being

> married to a man of sense and integrity, obedience was not painful or irksome, in early youth a director perhaps is necessary if the sphere of action is extensive ; but it seems to me that a new master and new lessons after ones opinions and habits were formed must be a little awkward, and with all due respect to the superior sex, I do not see how they can be necessary to a woman unless she were to defend her lands and tenements by sword or gun.

And she goes on, with a touch of pardonable pride, to recount that in five years, with the aid of certain lawyers, architects, masons, and the great "Capability Brown," she has laid out £36,000 in the purchase of land, has built a good house in Portman Square, and embellished Sandleford within and without, "as successfully as if I was Esquire instead of Madame ; few gentlemen in the neighbourhood have done more . . . so I really believe we shall escape the matrimonial influenza. It would be great joy to some of our sex if we were to be guilty of matrimony. The demi rips would say, 'See what happens to the prudes.'"

Of Lord Rockingham's death she writes from Sandleford on July 11 :

> I join with you, in regret for the death of Ld R. as a private man, for in that character he was amiable, and his talents were equal to the management of a noble fortune, but as that did not content him and he aspired to govern a great Empire, without capacity to do it, I am convinced it was happy for him, and perhaps lucky for great Brittain, that he was calld out of a World where good intentions and fair designs, without abilities to effect them, are of little avail. His Lordship had almost stirred up a rebellion in his County in order to get the late Ministers out of the places he and his Friends were impatient to occupy. I could hardly have pardond such vehement desire of power in the most able Statesman, but it was quite unpardonable in a Man who must have felt his incapacities when he was before a Minister, tho in times of less difficulty. I hope he has allotted a sum for the maintenance and repairs of the Palace he built in memory of —— victory on the glorious 27th of July. As I have not any correspondent in Town at present, I am quite uninformed what will be the consequence of his

death in regard to his political Collegues ; I wish Ld Shelburnes party may prevail, as I believe his experience and abilities, as well as his virtues, to be superior to those of the leaders of the other party. I wish Mr. Burke might keep his place, but fear he must follow Mr. F——. It is so much more easy to do mischief than good, I believe whoever of the late opposition gets fixd in administration will find it difficult to repair in that situation the harm they did in the other.

From W. W. Pepys

WIMPOLE STREET, 22 *July*.

I hope you have read Cecilia, and that You are as much pleas'd as I am with the delineation of some of the Characters : Mrs. Thrale told me the other day that it seem'd to her like a Camera Obscura in a Window of Piccadilly, so exactly were the Characters represented : Sure Mr. and Mrs. Harrel (your Neighbours) are admirably represented ! Miss Larolles is the Representative of a very large Class, and the mixture of dignity and sweetness in Mrs. Delville is finely supported. I trust too that *You* are satisfied with Cecilia ; for tho' she has somewhat too much *Coldness* and *Fortitude* for *me*, yet as I know your Ideas of Female Excellence require a very high degree of Reserve and Delicacy, I am in hopes She will meet with your approbation : Perhaps you and Miss Gregory will Both be angry with me, but I cannot help entertaining some *Doubts* whether young Ladies persist in calling their Lovers *Sir*, and *Mr. Delville*, in certain Situations and after certain Confessions; however, that is a matter of which Ladies are best qualified to judge . . . tho' I am not blind to the exaggeration of some of the Characters as Briggs and Mr. Delville the Father, yet I think the Work in general does Miss Burney very great Credit . . . I long to know what you think of it. . . .

To her Sister

SANDLEFORD, *July*.

I have invited about 50 haymakers with their little families to sup here. Last Saturday I gave a supper to all the work-people employed under the direction of Mr. Brown in adorning and embellishing the pleasure ground. The appetite with which they eat, the jollity with which they laughed and sung showed me I had not ill bestowed my meat and drink.

In a letter to Mrs. Carter of about the same date this Saturday's supper is described, and Mrs. Montagu mentions:

> The scene is extremely animated; 20 men at work in the wood and grove, and the fields around are full of haymakers. The persons employed in the woods are poor weavers who by the decay of our manufacture at Newbury are void of employment and not having been trained to the business of agriculture are not dexterous at the rake and pitchfork, but the plain digging and driving wheel barrows they can perform and are very glad to get their daily subsistence.

On Lord Rockingham's death, George III. nominated Lord Shelburne as First Lord of the Treasury, and Mrs. Montagu's feminine partiality for her old friend is thus femininely testified:

> I have forbid my newsman sending me the "Morning Chronicle" because it abuses Lord Shelburne which shows I have a tender regard for his Lordship.

Another extract from Sandleford may be given here to illustrate the country life of the day:

> Our party consists of the fair Gregory, my nephew Montagu, his tutor, and your humble servant. If the weather is fine the young men take a ride in the morning, and about noon return to their Studies. Mademoiselle Greg drives me in a whiskey "over the hills and far away." We return before dinner long enough for the business of the toilette, and an hour of reading for the young lady, and the domestic regulations of Madame, and supervising the workwomen who are employed in a prodigious undertaking of embroidery in feathers; at four o'clock we sit down together to dinner with the good appetite, good spirits and good humour which fresh air, moderate exercise and excursions through the beautiful scenes of nature at this fine season of the year must naturally create; to this succeeds our pot of coffee, not laced with politicks, then tea is brought, but with it comes not scandal, tittle tattle, or calumny of any sort. We saunter together till within an hour of sunset, then I retire to my dressing room, the young folks still walk till nearly nine; they repair to their studies till 10, then comes supper mirth and laughter. I take my little supper in my

dressing room, by which I get some leisure time, and leave my young people to indulge that innocent gaiety of conversation so becoming their time of life.

Lancelot Brown spent a few days with them at Sandleford while the gardens and wood were being transformed under his magic wand into "sweet pastorals and gentle elegiacs. He is an agreeable, pleasant companion as well as a great genius in his profession. I consider him as a great poet."

The weather of the late summer was disastrously bad : "100 acres of turnips on my farms here and in the north are now devoured by a black worm, my hay is rotting in the fields, and some of my wheat will be smutty." Virgil is invoked for a georgical elegy in mournful strains, and the journey to Northumberland has to be abandoned. She writes impatiently to urge the Veseys to set out on their visit to England, and threatens :

> If you delay your coming any longer I will get all the wits of Mr. Vesey's Club to write lampoons and libels upon him. I know they wish impatiently for his coming and their chagrin if he disappoints them, will set a keen edge on their satire.

Mr. Vesey had been made a member of Johnson's Literary Club in 1773.

Mrs. Montagu, like others of her sex, had a tender spot for even an unreformed rake, and had strongly disapproved of Mr. Vesey's being prevented from joining one of her parties, ostensibly under doctor's orders :

> I wish Monsey was hanged, and then embowell'd and stuff'd with rhubarb, a poor doggrel witt, who has no goût for the Epick, is determined to keep away the son of the song from our feast of shells ! I am convinced that your note will bring Ossian himself, and he will play upon Eolus's harp while we are at dinner, the Vulgar will think it is the wind, but we shall know it is the bard of Morven, I could have made a rhubarb tart for Mr. Vesey, and have put a good custard upon it, a better preparation than Monseys, who in the bitterness of his

jealousy has given this untimely dose. I depend on seeing my Dear Mrs. Vesey, and I hope that will break the Doctors heart.

I have not found any record of Mrs. Montagu's having encountered Rousseau when he was being lionised in London in 1766, though Mrs. Vesey wrote in March : " I thank you for the letter to Rousseau. Has he been presented to the blue stockings ? " Here is her view of the *Confessions* :

To Mrs. Carter

Sept. the 30th.

Pray my dear Friend have you met with the strangest book that ever appeard, les confessions de Jean Jaques ? I think a pure Virgin, like you, will read it with less disgust and horror than the Matrons can do. I imagine you will not understand some of Jean Jaques strange relations, they cannot corrupt yr mind, so may be safely read, but not without disgust ; had I expected such stuff I shd not have meddled with the book, but as it gives the strangest specimens of the human kind that ever was shewn I am glad I was not prevented reading it. The virtuous Jean Jacques is a great Lyar ; the delicate Jean Jaques (who cd not accept in a present what was offerd to him) was a thief, With all his talents he had such imbecilities he had great difficulty to earn his livelihood. He changed his religion when very young for motives of interest. He lived in a criminal commerce with a Madame de Warens, tho he knew she carryd on one at the same time with her gardener. He says the happiest moments of his life were, when he, the said gardener and said Lady, in fits of tenderness, embraced each other. Quel trio d'amitié ! the Gardener died and Jean Jaques went away for a while ; when he returnd, he found the Lady had an intrigue with a Friseur, whom she had taken into her family ; however, being, as he often tells you, the most chaste, virtuous, pious, tender hearted, and religious Woman in the World, she was incapable of any cruelty to an old friend, and offerd the same favours as during the intrigue with the Gardener ; but there Jean Jacques shew'd some delicacy, for he declined the offer, telling her, it wd degrade her ; on this she grew rather cool, for as she was *chastity* itself, did not grant her favours from any solicitations of constitution, nor had any gratification in her intercourse with the Men, therefore she thought it a mere caprice in Jean Jacques to alter his manner of living with her, for such a bagatelle, in short after a while he left her, but the remembrance of the extream happiness he enjoyd in the years he lived with her and the Gardener, remains in his mind superior to everything he has found in this World, and [he] ascribes all his virtue and piety to the conversation and example of this Madme de Warens. He concludes his confessions very early, what were the sins of his more mature age he does not inform us, he declares he sent his children aux enfans trouvés, and yet, puts in a claim to the merit of a good father, for he says he shd have been a very tender parent, if he had kept his children at home. I know it will be a comfort to you to know that he appears to have been mad almost from his infancy, after all the bad things he confesses, one is glad to think he is not rational. He supposes all the present generation to be combined against him, and that he has always spies at his heels. I suppose that from Adam to the infant born to day, there has not been such a disposition, for all that is strange and different from others characters in him is not the effect of extraordinary incidents and situations, but arises entirely from himself. I believe indeed his early reading romance gave him an affectation of great sentiments. Many a Girl by reading the loves of Mandane for the great Cyrus, or some Princess for Alexander the Great, has been so infected with the passion, as to marry a paltry scoundrel, thinking she was acting like the enamourd princess, so our Jean Jaques fancies he is acting according to the dictates of romantick magnanimity, while he is telling a paltry lye or committing petty larceny. His imagination is all that is delicate and high about him, and he derives his satisfaction in himself from his sentiments, not from his actions.

Miss Gregory travelled north this autumn with her brother to visit her family in Edinburgh, and her first letters to Mrs. Montagu, who missed her terribly, are charmingly written, full of affection and not without humour. Of her brother's wife, whom she now met for the first time, she writes that a rather too gushing manner reminded her of Dr. Johnson's remark, on being bored by Lady Lucan's effusive style : " Madam, you are too luscious ! "

Mr. Pulteney, the husband of Lord Bath's niece, who was already a widower, now actually decided to send his daughter for education in a Paris convent, and asked Mrs. Carter (to whom he was continuing the annuity first given by Lord Bath) to chaperon her to the French capital.

Mrs. Montagu was greatly shocked by this proposal, and expressed herself very strongly to Mrs. Carter:

> I cannot help feeling a good deal of anxiety at your undertaking a journey at this season of the year, and the purpose for which you undertake it, to place a great heiress in a french convent thrills me with horror . . . in this particular case everything will be done to make her a convert. She is unaccquainted with the world, of an indolent disposition and I believe rather obstinate, so if she should be led to think well of popery, she will not listen to any argument urged by her friends against it; and for what are these dangers to be incurred? The young ladies perhaps in the convents are better fashioned for the fine world than in our trumpery boarding schools, for there are in these convents penitent women of gallantery, and some ladies reduced to poverty by dissipation, the manners of these ladies may be more polite and genteel than that of the mistresses of boarding schools, but the air is rendered too impure for female virtue even by the sighs of a penitent sinner. Madame de Crevecœur of the house of Sully, was taken from one of these fine convents to be married to Monsieur de Masserans Son and by the bye, I never saw a bride at the Guild at Newcastle half so gauche. Madame de Masserans of the house of Rohan complained to me at the birthday drawing room that her son sueoit comme un Cochon; she had been bred in a convent. . . . I will own that French women who have lived in the world have all the graces (but the grace of God) in a higher degree than English women, their whole attention is to please, every flirt of their fans is coquettry; an english woman when in company thinks of pleasing herself, a french woman of pleasing every body else. . . . Read what Madame de Genlis says of the education of the convent. . . .

Madame de Masseran was presumably the widow of the Prince de Masserano, late Spanish Ambassador to England. Edward Jerningham, writing in 1783, speaks of her son and his bride as "the ugliest pair that ever were seen."

The letter is far too long for quotation, but a paragraph at the end is too delightful for omission in its quick transition from subtle popery to smuggled petticoats:

> Foreign education had before seduced a god daughter of mine to popery so perhaps my fears are the more alarmed. I beg of you to carry a flannel gown to sleep in at night for inns are so little frequented in France one often meets with damp beds. I know you are not by trade a smuggler but as at Paris there are waddings for petticoats and cloaks, only a few shillings, if you could get as much as would line a cloak and quilted petticoat it would be of a great service to me, and to save the delicacy of your conscience I do not ask for the silk covering, your maid may run them into her petticoat over the lining. The French call them Wayetts, I suppose spelt Ouettes.

The allusion to a goddaughter seduced to popery must refer to Lydia Sterne. It was too bad to ask Mrs. Carter to swallow the sophistry of the silk lining.

Mrs. Montagu's papist alarms turned out to be largely unjustified, as Miss Pulteney's convent was appropriated to education and did not receive the fine ladies of the world, and her father had taken measures to prevent any attempts on the religion of the young heiress; but "If he knew," she writes, "the pains I formerly took to prevent Lord Bath from diverting the family estate out of the proper line, he would not wonder I should be interested in the prosperity of the heiress." The Earl had very nearly made George Colman, the dramatist and his wife's nephew, his sole heir.

> I was at the Drawing room yesterday. . . . I stood near Lady Howe, who made me very happy by telling me Lord Howe assured her Mr. Fielding had much recoverd his health. Many fair Brides were presented, and the Drawing room was very full. Ld Shelburne seem'd in good spirits, but it is the

business of a Minister to seem so. I am afraid he will have an uncomfortable life when the Parlt sits. This day Sr G Rodney dined in the City, he passed through huzzaing crouds, a pleasant thing when a Mans conscience joins in the applause, as his may justly do. I am not afraid of having my windows broken if they are not illuminated. He need not derive his lustre from the Tallow Chandlers shop.

The Town has since the meeting of Parliament had all the perfections and faults of a populous city. I was at two assemblies and a ball last week. At the first assembly at Lady Lucan's there was a most illustrious guest, nothing less than the Prince of Wales. I remarked to his Royal Highness honour he did not make any sort of fracas, bowed as civilly whispered as softly addressed himself as politely as any man in the room and did not seem conscious that he was the heir to 3 kingdoms, and yet there was not any levity misbecoming his royal rank.

. . . But how small will all private disasters appear compared to the loss of Gibraltar, if the news papers account be verified ! Lord North, and Lord Sandwich, are much obliged to Lord Shelburne, and Lord Keppel, for turning them out of their places before this great national disgrace and misfortune happen'd. Rats are much wiser animals than Politicians, they quit the vessel before it sinks, these rush into it. May this report be false, or alas poor England ! . . .

Have you read Miss Burneys Cecilia ? I hear much commendation of it. I reserved it to entertain me in my Northern journey, and now I keep it, as an interesting amusement, if I should be indisposed, and confined at home. I have spent so much of my time in my Whiskey I am ashamed to give the hours I am at home to mere amusement.

The canard of the loss of Gibraltar was a needlessly cruel perversion of its magnificent and successful defence during the tremendous attack of September 9-14 by the whole combined fleets of France and Spain, a land force of 40,000 men, and D'Arcon's ten specially built battering-ships carrying 212 large guns. But the resources of Sir George Eliott, who had for more than three years baffled all the efforts of the two Powers, were by no means exhausted ; his newly fortified lines screened a cleverly placed little squadron of English gunboats which darted out upon the battering-ships during the night of the 13th with disastrous effects, whilst the red-hot cannon balls, which Sir Robert Boyd had suggested, set ship after ship on fire, till the whole fleet of battering-ships was destroyed, 2000 of the enemy killed or prisoners, and the uncaptured fortress, which had only lost 90 men, was relieved and provisioned a month later by Lord Howe, and so remained till, in the following February, the Duke de Crillon sent General Eliott news that the peace preliminaries were signed.

Mrs. Montagu's news of the capture of Gibraltar probably came from Paris, where (as Grafton's Autobiography records) confidence of victory was so assured that the fall of the fortress was actually exhibited on the stage, and the favourite street toy was the Gibraltar fan with a picture of the fort, which, on being turned over, fell into a heap of ruins.

December brought another letter of most untoward length from Robert Potter about his translation of Euripides and Mr. Woodhull's jealous rivalry, inviting Mrs. Montagu as his Delphian oracle to decide whether the whole story should be added as a postscript to his work or proudly ignored.

Reporting a visit to Lord Kames and Mrs. Drummond, Miss Gregory says they were greatly amused at a rumour that Mrs. Montagu was growing fat, and Mrs. Drummond lamented that her cameo would lose its likeness. This cameo was presumably the one already referred to, executed by James Tassie the modeller, who, with Quin, invented the white enamel employed for these medallions. The face is in profile, the hair turned back over a cushion, and curls at the ears. This cameo was engraved by Holloway, but whether it is earlier than or identical with the one produced by Wedgwood I am not certain.

Lord Kames, who had sent his beloved Mrs. Montagu a message by Miss Gregory, imploring her to come North next year if she wished to see him again, did not survive, and indeed was too ill to receive her reply. He died on December 27, "going out like the snuff of a candle" in his seventy-ninth year.

It was one more of life's lost opportunities, on which she was fond of moralising:

> Life is so short it is a pity to pass any part of it with more disagreable circumstances than the state of human affairs necessarily produce, but almost every day of our lives is a dupe to the morrow which never comes, and in order to enjoy something in prospect, we sacrifice all we have in present. And after all this moralizing upon it, I shall go to Northumberland next autumn and pass three months there just as if I had a lease for Methusalems life, for tho one thinks in ones own manner one acts in ye way of ye world, and leaves behind one an example as foolish as that one has follow'd, and the World grows older without growing wiser. Human reason is a mere rhetorician ; it talks well, flourishes finely, and never persuades ; it seems as if its office was only to harangue.

1783

DOROTHEA GREGORY—HARDWICKE, CONWAY, SIDDONS, KIPPIS

Miss Gregory goes North. Her engagement to Mr. Alison. Mrs. Montagu's anger. Johnson's *Lives* and Lord Hardwicke. Haymaking at Sandleford. General Conway's present. The drive to Denton. Visits *en route*. Busy days at the Collieries. Matthew visits Lord Harrowby's. Lord Spencer's illness and death. The little world. Return from Denton. Mrs. Siddons in *Zara*. Dr. Monsey at ninety. Lord Valencia's second marriage. D'Alembert's death. Sir William Hamilton's vase. Letter from Andrew Kippis.

When the pretty and attractive Miss Gregory went to Scotland in the autumn of 1782, the prescient Mrs. Montagu expressed a foreboding anxiety lest she should fall in love with some Scotch laddie; and the first letter of 1783 announces her engagement to the Rev. Archibald Alison, who was afterwards to be the author of an *Essay on Taste*, and who certainly evinced it in his present choice. Miss Greg's letter, announcing the betrothal to her protectress, is a very touching and delightful one, but as it fills more than seven closely written pages, it could not be found space for here.

Mrs. Montagu's wrath (which her adopted daughter seems in some degree to have anticipated) was really beyond all reason, from so reasonable a woman; and one can only imagine, reading between the lines of her furious discomfiture, that she had secretly anticipated that her nephew and heir would have fallen in love with Dorothea. Herein perhaps she evinced a lack of her usually bright perception, since daily intercourse under the same roof by no means ordinarily promotes the affection which leads to marriage. Elizabeth Montagu's own temperament had always lacked passion. She had been greatly loved, in different degrees and ways by half-a-dozen men at least, all her seniors; but the adoration of Lord Bath, the devotion of Lord Lyttelton, the mad infatuation of Monsey, the affection of Gilbert West and Henry Home and Leonard Smelt had never awakened in her that answering warmth which in many women such homage might have aroused. Young Macdonald perhaps, before his untimely death in Rome, had come nearer to touching her heart than any other man, but that is merely the conjecture from a few lines of their letters, and from the stray references of friends. This incapacity of passion (if incapacity it was, and not merely that the chord which would have vibrated never chanced to be struck) may be accounted as a significant defect, or as a saving grace; but it must not be confounded with lack of affection or sympathy, both of which qualities are abundantly manifested not only in her intercourse with the men above mentioned, but especially in her friendships with Mrs. Vesey, James Beattie, Mrs. Carter, and others. From this incapacity, however, and from the anger of a thwarted purpose, Dorothea Gregory had now to suffer severely. Alison had no living and no fortune; her family ought to have explained to her all the disadvantages of such a connection; she was reminded of a previous unfortunate love affair of six years back; she was bidden to recollect that the prospect of a family must be provided for; she was given to understand that she was stepping down from an assured position to which she had been adopted; she was enjoined to absolute secrecy about the affair to young Montagu, who, his aunt feared, might find such an unauthorised example contagious; in short, she was made thoroughly miserable, without her resolution being shaken in the smallest degree, though Alison immediately offered to release her. She returned, very shortly after this painful correspondence, to Mrs. Montagu, who evidently, but most mistakenly, imagined that separation might dissolve the engagement. The breach was gradually healed, and Mrs. Montagu recognised—grudgingly, the girl's candour and staunch devotion to the man of her choice ; but the whole episode is a painful one, from which Dorothea Gregory emerges with far more credit than her patroness.

Horace Walpole, who had a great esteem for Miss Gregory, describes her conduct throughout as noble and reasonable and that of her patroness—whom he did not love—as preposterous at least ; and he suggests that Dorothea, who had acquired all that was good in her learned mistress and none of her pretensions and affectations, was perhaps a little weary of the tie, though nobody could behave with more respect and gratitude for really great obligations. It was altogether rather a pitiful business.

Lancelot Brown, the great Landscape Gardener, who, as we saw a year ago, was engaged upon the grounds and the monks' fish-ponds of Sandleford, died somewhat unexpectedly on February 6, leaving his work there unfinished; but it is still perpetuated under the name of "Brown's Pond."

A letter written in an almost undecipherable hand by Lord Hardwicke on May 30 shows how deeply Johnson's criticism of "poor Lyttelton" still rankled among the *Bas-bleu* fraternity.

The cult of fresh air was still in its infancy, in spite of Mrs. Montagu's "whiskey," of which he asks for particulars :

> Sir R: Jebb recommended Airings in an open Carriage to Me, but I have none at present fit *for the Purpose*,—and I have not accustomed myself to be so *Airy*. Sir Richd seems a sensible Man, but rather *Mysterious*, and to expect explicit *Faith*.

To Mrs. Carter ?

Have you read Mr. Potter's admirable inquiry into some passages in Dr. Johnson's "Lives of the poets"? His reprehensions of the malignant Biographer and wretched critick are decent tho' severe. . . . Mr. Lapidge who is to finish Mr. Brown's plan here, spent some days here and left us yesterday.

From Lord Hardwicke

London, *June 20th.*

I am fit for a correspondent in one sense that I sit at home, and have little to do, am qualified in another, that I see nobody and am quite an invalid. I was beginning to recover and was setting out for Richmond, when a return of fever prevented me and tho' that has departed, it has left me very weak. another page or two from Mr. P[otter] would have done complete justice to our departed friend, It has given me a bad opinion of Dr. Johnson's heart, because he had no provocation and went out of his way to vent spleen and ill nature.

Potter's "Inquiry" is primarily a defence of Gray against the Doctor's criticism. Horace Walpole, however—always ready to have a dig at Mrs. Montagu—says: "I have heard that the true object was to revenge the attack on Lord Lyttelton at the instigation of Mrs. Montagu, who has her full share of incense, and who with insipid Bishop Hurd is pronounced the two best critics of this or any age. Were I Johnson, I had rather be criticised than flattered so fulsomely." So far as I am aware, there is not a tittle of evidence that Mrs. Montagu in any way instigated Mr. Potter to this Inquiry. Indeed, as is shown in her letter to Mr. Pepys, she deprecated the attacks upon the Doctor which the *Lives* produced. And whilst Walpole accuses her of "instigating" poor Mr. Potter, Mr. Bettany in his *Edward Jerningham and his Friends* pillories her for "neglecting" him, a charge hardly justified by a petulant line in one of Potter's letters, and refuted in the next a couple of months later, and in a dozen other kindly and grateful references. Who would be a "Minerva" and a "Patroness"?

June was spent at Sandleford superintending the hay harvest and the work of Mr. Brown's successor in carrying out his designs for the grounds, and in long drives with Miss Gregory in the whiskey by way of preparation for their 300-mile drive to Denton a little later on. Apropos of haymaking, Horace Walpole's friend, General Conway, who owned Park Place, and who had recently succumbed to verse-writing, sent her some lines: "To Mrs. Montagu with two swords to be used as scythes," of which:

> Here may they harmless skim your peaceful mead
> And smooth the paths where Virtue loves to tread,

may be a sufficient sample.

In July, young Montagu, who had been to visit Mr. Lyttelton, Lord Westcote's son, brought his friend back to Sandleford, where the future Baron Lyttelton gained much approval. The boys had been school-fellows at Harrow. Letters of this month praise Dr. Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric, just published; refer to Mr. William Clayton's death, who had broken his neck riding, and had not, to her sorrow, left the beautiful Harleyford to his widow, Lady Louisa, for life; and report the Duchess of Portland and Mrs. Vesey on the fashionable sands of Margate.

In August she and Miss Gregory started on their drive to Denton in the whiskey, the post-chaise following with relay horses, for inclement weather. They passed through Blenheim Park, varying their usual route, and admiring Capability Brown's water scheme more than the house, "which is not a good piece of architecture, though a great piece of magnificence." After seeing Warwick Castle they went on to Coventry and paid a visit to one of the ribbon factories where "this flimsy article employed an infinite number of hands":

> The combined wisdom of all the legislators who have endeavoured to increase population have not with all their efforts occasioned so many marriages and their prolific consequences as the inventor of top knots! . . . We shall sleep at Derby, in the evening visit the china manufactory; we shall then enter Yorkshire at Sheffield, from thence we shall see Leeds, and then we fall into our common track of travelling to Denton.

—where they arrived on the 21st.

> I have now above 500 men at work below ground in the pits and above sixty in a wheatfield reaping, not to speak of the bricks, tiles, the tar manufactory, &c. going on at the water side. My late purchased colliery is now working very successfully. I thank God all things are in as prosperous a state as possible.
>
> I imagine that the fair Gregory has given you a full account of the fine places we saw in our journey. She is a most excellent Charioteer, and we have made many excursions in our Whisky since we came to Denton. The fresh air and fine exercise will I hope preserve my health through all fatigues of business; here I have the satisfaction of finding all my affairs in great order and prosperity, and I enjoy many solid and substantial blessings, but for the pleasures of the imagination and the delights of rural life I cannot enjoy them here. I live in a great beehive, and tho' as the queen bee, I do not work myself, yet like her Majesty, I have care of the collected treasures. My Resident Steward, and Mr. Black my South Country Steward, are now very busy in forming new leases of my Estates, the old ones being to expire at Mayday. A new purchased estate which cost me £36,000 adjoining to Denton Estates will, now as belonging to the same proprietor, be as it were incorporated, and some farms will be enlarged, and many alterations of that kind present themselves. When these said Stewards have digested their scheme it will be laid before me, after I have considered it and got all the information I can, the chief part of my business here will be settled and I shall then know when I may leave this place. I imagine I shall be at liberty in less than 3 weeks.
>
> Pray did you see the Ball of fire? My Servants who were

taking the things out of the Carriages saw it, but I did not, having unluckily got into the Inn before its descent. I want to hear what the Philosophers say of this extraordinary appearance. I fear this Ball of Fire has done great mischief in some part of the World.

Montagu is to set out for Lord Harrowby's on Friday; tho' I am sorry to lose the pleasure of his company I feel a compensation in reflecting on the infinite delight with which he will make his journey; master of himself, of his valet and two horses he will feel the independant greatness of his situation. A General who has for many years commanded several thousand men does not feel himself so considerable. This will be the first excursion he has made without a tutor and tho' there is great amity between him and Mr. Gilbank still at nineteen it is a fine thing to be one's own master.

In September they paid visits to the Ords at Fenham and to Sir Thomas Clavering's seat at Axwell Park. The condition of Lord Spencer (who died in the following month) is described as very terrible. He had married one of the Poyntz girls, who were amongst Mrs. Montagu's most intimate friends, and had given to the world the vivaciously beautiful Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

Young Montagu was making himself acquainted with the colliery and the business folk of the neighbourhood, much to his aunt's satisfaction:

I always pittied a certain set of people who some years ago called themselves the "little world," it is much better to be of the general world. I would not have a man to confine his regards to witts, scholars, philosophers, politicians, or fine gentlemen and ladies, but be able to converse with ease, and hearken with intelligence to persons of every rank, degree and occupation.—The man who has only the graces of the drawing room, and the tone of conversation of any particular set of men, is little superior to what a monkey would be who had the articulate talents of a parrot.

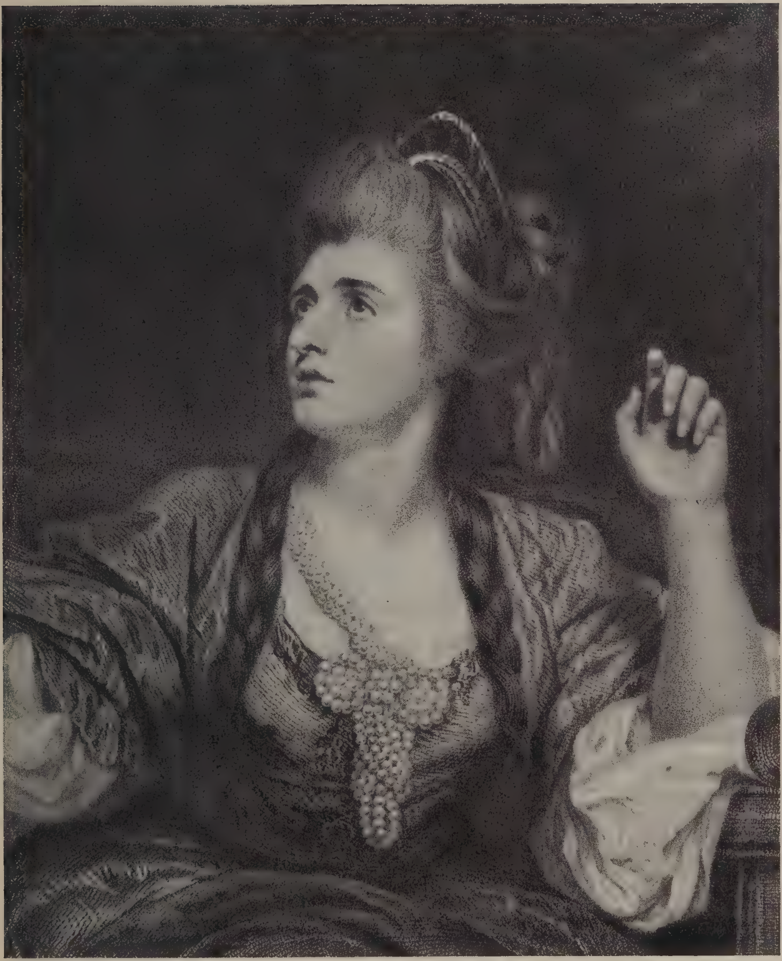
Business at Denton being very successfully and prosperously accomplished, the two ladies returned south in October, staying *en route* with the Cholmeleys and Smelts at Housham, and arriving at Portman Square on the 16th.

The town was very empty and quiet, giving our lady "a period in which I can think over what I have been doing and what I have further to do"; whilst the Pitts took Miss Gregory to see Mrs. Siddons act Zara in *The Mourning Bride*, in which "the poet has so much overstepped the modesty of nature and decency of manner in the character of Zara I do not think it possible for Mrs. Siddons to appear in it to advantage." Visits were paid to the Cambridges at Twickenham and to Mrs. Garrick and Hannah More at Hampton, and in November she renewed acquaintance with an old admirer:

> I expect Dr. Monsey his Daughter and Grand Daughters to dine with me to day. He told me with great gayety that he was now in his ninetieth year. I congratulated him upon having kept all his Witt, and a great part of his indiscretion. I was really rejoyced to see him so gay. I really think, when the busy bustling season of life is over, levity and frolicsome idleness are as pardonable as in infancy before it begins, provided the frolics are not of a kind to hurt a Man in that World to which he must soon be transferred; the cares of this World shd cease with our interest in it.

Messenger Monsey could no longer see to read, and his daughter, Mrs. Alexander, had to keep him amused by many games of backgammon. In her volumes of the earlier life of Elizabeth Montagu, Mrs. Climenson recorded that Mrs. Alexander had one daughter, who became the mother of Baron Cranworth the well-known lawyer who was Lord Chancellor in 1852. As a matter of fact, she had ten children, of whom many descendants survive.

The engagement of Lord Valentia (the first Lord Lyttelton's son-in-law, whose first wife had died early this year), to Sir Henry Cavendish's daughter, "a woman of fashion and character," is chronicled in November; and the death of her Paris acquaintance,



SARAH SIDDONS
After Sir Joshua Reynolds

the celebrated Academician D'Alembert, is recorded with devout intolerance:

> He had the stone and gravel in his kidneys and no cheering hope in his heart of a blessed immortality, so he gave himself up to rage and despair, was an object of horror to every Christian and of contempt to the Philosophers. . . . I want much to hear your defence of Mary Queen of Scots. I think if you can clean her up into a demi rep, she will be much obliged to you. I have always considered her a worthy Éleve of Catherine de Medicis, who was taught to put politicks into gallantry, till together the most horrible mixture was composed.
>
> Ld Grantham and Sr Joseph York dined here to day. I was very happy in their company, but would have been more happy to have had them in the Cabinet Council. their Ladies dined here also. Lady York is neither young nor handsome, but seems sensible and polite. Sr Wm and Miss Hamilton were of the party. We are to go to Sr Will^{m} Hamiltons tomorrow to see a fine Vase for which he paid 1000L sterling, he intends to give it to the British Museum to which he has already been a great benefactor.

The famous vase was, however, sold by Sir William Hamilton to the Duke of Portland in 1787, and was not deposited in the British Museum till 1810. It was wantonly smashed by a lunatic in February 1845, but pieced together subsequently. Wedgwood made a remarkable reproduction from the original vase.

Lord Grantham was Foreign Secretary, and Sir Joseph Yorke brother of the 2nd Earl of Hardwicke.

Andrew Kippis, editor of the *Biographia Britannica*, wrote on December 27:

> With respect to the Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare, the Mention of it fell so naturally in my Way, that I could not have omitted it without being reproached both by my Understanding and my Heart. At the same Time, I said the least that could possibly be said. If I had done full Justice to my real Sentiments, I should have added, that the Work is the best Defence of Shakespeare ever written, and that it is one of the most complete pieces of poetical criticism which any Age or Country has produced.

What had Mrs. Montagu done to deserve this ?

DR. JOHNSON, MR. SHAKESPEARE, AND MRS. MONTAGU

Johnson and the ladies. First meets Mrs. Montagu. Anna Williams. Queen Elizabeth's plates. Johnson's evening at Hill Street. Lord Bath on their friendship. The *Essay on Shakespeare*. Mrs. Montagu on Johnson's English. Johnson's Shakespeare. She criticises his *Preface*. Disapproves the attacks on Johnson. Mrs. Thrale's quotation. Voltaire and Johnson. Mrs. Montagu goes on with her Essay. Its publication in 1769. Johnson's opinion of it. Other critics. Horace Walpole approves. The Reviewers. Letters from Dr. Johnson. Letter from Anna Williams. Coll in the Hebrides. Johnson at Hill Street. He asks help for Davies. Begs for a print of Mrs. Montagu. The Life of Lord Lyttelton. *Dialogues of the Dead*. Mrs. Montagu "drops" Johnson. An explosion. The Pepys-Johnson battle at Streatham. "Queen of the Blues." Reconciliation. She stops attacks on the Doctor. Letter from Dr. Johnson on the death of Anna Williams. Letter from Lord Hardwicke. Johnson's death. His opinion of Mrs. Montagu. Note on the Letters.

That the Great Cham of Literature and the Queen of the Blue Stockings, as he himself christened her, should have had a good deal to say to and of each other was only to be expected ; that the conjunction of two planets superior and inferior might produce certain electrical disturbances was also not improbable. "Madam," the Doctor once said to a very talkative lady, "I am very fond of the company of ladies ; I like their beauty, I like their delicacy, I like their vivacity, and I like their *silence*." Boswell more than once expatiated on Johnson's fondness for feminine society and his desire to be in the ladies' good books. But his ideas of social converse were perhaps a little one-sided. To a lady who observed to him that women surpassed men in epistolary correspondence, and were most pleasing when in conversation, "No, Madam," returned he, "I think they are most pleasing when they hold their tongues." Baretti declared that he always talked his best to the ladies; but the trouble was that some of them—and Mrs. Montagu, one may surmise, was of the number—thought conversation should be more than monologue.

The Doctor was probably introduced to Mrs. Montagu about 1759, by Mrs. Carter, their mutual friend, to whom Johnson declared a "respect which I neither owe nor pay to any other."

Mrs. Carter was at that time helping the Doctor to raise a fund in aid of his blind friend Anna Williams. Mrs. Montagu obtained and forwarded a number of subscriptions, for which Johnson wrote a letter of thanks on behalf of his protégée "for your favour, which was conferred with all the grace that elegance can add to beneficence."

Mrs. Montagu writes from Sandleford on the 8th August 1762:

> My Lord Bath without my applying, having heard by another hand I was getting subscriptions for Mrs. Williams, gave me five guineas for her, which I carried to her. I am sure you rejoyce in Lord Butes manner of giving Mr. Johnson a pension, a man of Mr. Johnsons merit should have a thing of that kind offer'd to him with delicacy. I hope this instance of regard to a man like Mr. Johnson will encourage other men of genius to imitate him in the right application of their talents; his were all employed in the service of religion and virtue.

The Doctor's estimate of the measure of permissible flattery was, in Mrs. Montagu's case, certainly generous. When she showed him some china plates which had once belonged to Queen Elizabeth he assured her that they had suffered little diminution of dignity in falling to her; and when apologising for his omission to acknowledge an invitation to her house, she was told that "to be ignorant of your eminence is not easy but to him who lives out of the reach of the public voice." This was written in 1774, but whether the Doctor had previously honoured the Blue Stocking assemblies I am not certain.

From another letter to Lord Bath—written, I think, in 1762—I extract the following account of what was presumably the Doctor's first visit to Hill Street and its hostess personally:

> On Saturday when I came from airing I found a card signifying that Mr. Johnson would wait on me that evening, he came early and staid late, so I had much of his conversation. He has a great deal of Witt and humour, but the pride of knowledge and the fastidiousness of witt make him hard to please in books, so that he seems to take pleasure in few authors, for which I pity him. I believe he is not hard to please in conversation, for I hear he expresses himself delighted with the evening he pass'd here, and some of my friends tell me that since Polyphemus was in love there has not been so glorious a conquest as I have made over Mr. Johnson. He has many virtues, and witt and learning enough to make a dozen agreable companions, but a pride of talent always hurts and pains me. I do not love to see people use what God has given them as a light to shew them the imperfect nature and defective composition of man, employ'd in so different a manner, and as old Bishop Parnell says, I must ever respect the sublimity of humble minds.

Lord Bath, referring to this visit, says:

> I am told it was difficult for any one to get him away even at two oclock in the morning after having made a visit of five or six hours.

In a postscript to a letter of Lord Bath's to Mrs. Montagu written in May 1763, after saying he is the next night to dine with Miss Chudleigh and play cards, he adds jealously:

> How comes Johnson already to know the goodness and tenderness of your heart. Your wit sparkles at first sight and your good sense, judgment and knowledge appear in half an hours conversation, but methinks he has no right yet to

know anything of the tenderness of your heart ; and yet he pretends to know it as well as I do, who have known you so long and often blamed you for having it too tender.

From this it seems that the acquaintance had already passed its initial stages ; during the next two or three years her own studies led Mrs. Montagu to a close examination of the Doctor's critical work, and more especially of the lines upon which Shakespearian criticism might most profitably be conducted ; a study which was preparatory to the work on the writings and genius of Shakespeare compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets which she had it in her mind to produce. It is evident also from the following letters that she was analysing the Doctor's style with much care but by no means with complete approval.

To Mrs. Carter

October 24th, 1765.

I think with you that Mr. Johnson is perfectly right as to the tragedy of Cato ; it is a fine thing, but by no means a good drama. . . .

Whatever he says is beau dans un livre, but a play is not a book. I both perfectly understand and agree to what you say of the precision necessary in criticism, and there the words must certainly be weighd with scrupulous exactness, but I do not think they should astonish by their novelty, nor glitter by quaintness, which to tell you the truth, I think Mr. Johnsons are apt to do. The worst fault of language is to be equivocal, the next fault perhaps, is such a sort of novelty from new coin'd words, that the sense is not yet ascertain'd. Books written in the mother tongue should if possible be intelligible to those who know no others. However a criticism on Homer or Virgil may be adapted chiefly to scholars, because such only need to read them. We have no word in our language to express the fault I have to find with Mr. J—ns style, it is trop recherche. I should not at present have the courage to write on subjects of the solemn and important nature you allude to ; I must have more practise in writing, and try my talents on humbler themes first.

Extracts from letters to Mrs. Carter in 1766 show that Dr. Johnson having now, after interminable delays, inconsiderately published his Shakespeare edition just when Mrs. Montagu had been lucubrating her *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespeare*, the good lady was greatly exercised as to whether she should still proceed with her work:

> . . . So you went to dine with Mrs. Fielding, a very pretty fancy! you might as well have dined with Duke Humphrey. Did she luxuriously feast you with a chapter of Epictetus? I hope her maid Sarah considered the grosser appetite of hunger, or you might come ill off, for I dare say poor Fielding never thinks of dinner till it is time to eat it. . . . I have sent only one sheet of scrawl, for Mr. Johnson having just published his Shakespear I must see that I do not servilely seem to imitate, or presumptuously contradict him. You will think me perhaps conceited to go on with the work when he has just published a preface on Shakespear, and perhaps it may make me suppress the work, but having begun, I will finish it. I cannot say I am convinced that Mr. Johnsons criticisms are just, but I am afraid his talents will make the scale preponderate, as I cannot put into mine the weight of authority or that prevailing charm of writing which he can throw into his. The method I have persued is quite different from his; I thought there were enough already of vague panegyricks and general criticisms upon Shakespears works, so have taken a larger view of the dramatick art, and a more particular consideration of his merits and faults, excellencies and defects. I wish you would send for Johnsons Shakespear and read the preface. He seems to me to judge amiss when he says this author has greater genius for comedy than tragedy, and likewise when he says he wants the pathetick powers. Johnson begins his preface admirably, but I think it flags; however two of a trade . . .

Mrs. Montagu's criticisms of Johnson's Shakespeare in private letters to her friends have been endorsed by weightier judges. Lord Macaulay said the preface, though it contained some good passages, was not in his best style, and went on to condemn the work in the severest terms:

"It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless edition of any great classic. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive is indisputable. But unfortunately he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is especially desirable that an editor of Shakespeare should be conversant. . . . He ventured to publish an edition of Shakespeare without having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single scene of Massenger, Ford, Dekker, Webster, Marlowe, Beaumont, or Fletcher. His detractors were noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and honoured him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had discharged the duty of a commentator."

Johnson indeed had been lashed by Churchill's embittered "Pomposo" into the completion of a task which his indolence had far too long postponed; and though the great moralist thus extricated himself from the charge of cheating his friends (for the book had been liberally subscribed nine years before it appeared), the belated work can hardly be said to have added to his fame.

SANDLEFORD, 17*th*, [1766].

I suppose you may have seen some extracts of Mr. Johnsons preface to Shakespear, I have got the whole edition down here. It will appear presumption to go on with my work after Mr. Johnson has given his preface and notes, and yet having taken a quite different track I think I shall proceed for my amusement; but there will be many reasons against my ever making my performance publick. I do not agree with this critick in some of his opinions of Shakespear, and when I do not, it will appear presum^{n} to oppose a name of such authority; where we agree he will have express'd this opinion with so many more graces of manner and style that I had better hold my tongue. Both Mr. Pope and Johnson have written the prettiest essays imaginable on Shakespear, but I think they have done very little in shewing his excellencies in particular circumstances, and either general encomium or invective, is to me not properly criticism; both these writers aim to please rather than to teach. I had enterd into a particular critique

> of his historical plays, and a very full one of his Henry the fourth. I have shewn Mr. Voltaires injustice, and compared our Countryman with his boasted Corneille in many places where the subjects bore any relation, and also shewn the defects of the french Theater. Mr. Johnsons remarks at the end of Henry the 4th are very short and by no means such as one should expect from a critick. When I have put Mr. Popes and Johnsons essays together I do not mean to represent them as perfectly similar. Mr. Popes is by far I think the best composition, but he has only gatherd the finest flowers in the Field, Johnson has more nearly glean'd it, but his preface is not so beautiful as the other. His language is laboured, rather too fine for my taste, who love the negligences of genius better than the ornaments of study, but perhaps I judge so for want of refinement. I never love the velvet style, an equal pile as if cut by an engine, however in these effeminate days perhaps it will be admired for the very thing I dislike.

This criticism of the Johnsonian manner finds expression in another letter, probably of much later date, in which she writes :

> I agree with you in abhorring the ribaldry with which Mr. Johnson has been treated, and have loudly signified my disapprobation of it ; at the same time he always writes as if he was a parnassian beau, his language is wonderfully dress'd and finical, and I own, I think if he was fashionable enough to be copied, he would ruin the english language for which I have a great respect, as it is noble, strong, and fit for a free people.

Against these strictures we have Mrs. Thrale's declaration : " Mrs. Montagu once observed, that were an angel to give the *imprimatur*, Dr. Johnson's works were among those very few which would not be lessened by a line. That such praise, from such a lady, should delight him, is not strange."

Beyond remarking that Mrs. Thrale's accuracy of quotation is not unimpeachable, and that flattery is flattery, the faithful chronicler need not venture ; we must leave it at that.

Johnson, in alluding to Voltaire's remarks, had merely said, "These are the petty cavils of petty minds."

Voltaire responded: "Je ne veux point soupçonner le sieur Jonson d'être un mauvais plaisant et d'aimer trop de vin ; mais je trouve un peu singulier qu'il compte la bouffonnerie et l'ivrognerie parmi les beautés du théâtre tragique."

Boswell had vainly urged "the superstitious dog," as Voltaire called the Doctor, to reply to the Frenchman's strictures. "He said he perhaps might; but he never did." So it was left to little Mrs. Montagu to take the field.

Montagu Pennington declares (in his *Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter*) that Voltaire had made Mrs. Montagu's acquaintance in England, and that after the appearance of the Essay "he could never bear to mention her name but to ridicule or abuse her"; the latter statement may be true enough, but the present Editor has found no evidence that they had ever met, either in England or Paris.

In a further letter she writes:

> The attack I shall make upon Voltaire as a Critick is not the last contest I intend to have with him. He has ruined the principles of half our young people, and to shew him superficial in every thing would be of great use. I am sorry Mr. Johnson has pass'd him over with supercilious contempt, it is true that he deserves to be used so, but as he stands high in the opinion of many, I wish Mr. Johnson had exposed him. I wish you could get the whole of Johnson's preface, it teizes me sadly ; if he had said more upon Shakespear I should have dropt my undertaking, if he had said less, I should have gone on with more confidence ; the more I read this preface the better I like it, and the less I like my own. I have enter'd more into the subject in a critical way, and I think have better exhibited the perfections of Shakespear, as I have more minutely observed on them, but I shall entertain and please less perhaps, a few general observations will satisfy the generality of readers. I was provoked to this undertaking by the flippancy of Voltaire in a great measure, and also by thinking we had erred widely from the true dramatick art. I have so far proceeded, and

am so warm'd by the subject, that I hardly care to drop it, and yet I dont know whether after Mr. Johnson people will desire any more criticisms on Shakespear. I understood he was only to write notes upon him, and those merely to rectify the errors of the copies, but alas ! his Preface is so ingenious it terrifys me. I want to hear what people say of it, the eyes of jealousy admire a rival tho the tongue does not always confess his merit ; however, I assure you I have no wicked animosity against the man, tho I wish he had not written this preface, and I shall do it all possible honour in my way of speaking of it to his friends and his foes ; and indeed I am so afraid that where I think I perceive it faulty, that opinion should arise from the jealousy of an author, I shall hardly trust myself to speak of it, but with general commendation. If I find people think he has thoroughly disscuss'd the merits of Shakespear, my work instead of going printed under pyes to the oven, shall go in manuscript into the fire. You will hear at Bath how far people are contented with this work of Johnsons. I hope he will get a great deal of money by it, for he is a most worthy charitable man as well as a genius.

October 21, 1766.

It is strange that Mr. Johnson should so superficially examine the merits and faults of his authors plays ; he should have said more or have said nothing. If he had given attention to the dramatic genius of Shakespeare he might have done him justice, and I wonder he did not enter with pleasure into a task that seem'd peculiarly suited to him ; he has taste and learning, therefore is a capable critick, he wants invention, he wants strength and vigour of genius to go through a long original work. I will own he gives smart correction to former commentators, but the last commentator deserves the least indulgence, as he had more opportunity of seeing the futility of the thing. . . .

In another letter there is a phrase which is amusing in view of the terrific storm which was to arise later over " poor Lyttelton " :

I agree with you poor Johnson is ill used, but I cannot help sending you an application of the character of Holofernes that has been made to him ; to say the truth, it expresses what I have always felt when I have read him. Lord Lyttelton says the word writation, which Lord Cobham invented for those works which had a certain ostentation of phrase, is most applicative to Johnson.

Mrs. Montagu had devoted a long period of study and thought to the elaboration of this essay, and one sees, by the way in which she returns again and again to the subject in letters to her intimate friends, how greatly she was upset by the appearance of Johnson's work, which, while itself inadequate, now occupied the stage and might seem to give her efforts an air of presumption.

> What appears to me deficient is his examen of the plays, in which he neither enters into the conduct of the drama nor characters of the persons in a critical manner, and sometimes ascribes things to them which seem to me totally unjust.

After citing instances she concludes :

> however I say this only to you for I am far from thinking that to pull down another person's work would set up mine, so wherever I blame him I shall be silent, besides tho' I hope to be unknown, yet I would not say any thing which I should be ashamed of if I was discovered, and it would appear very flippant in me to censure a man of his parts and learning. All will allow authority to his character tho' they may disapprove of this work, which he has not done in a manner worthy of his abilities.

So she decided *festinare lente* with her own work, and to let it take its chance two or three years later.

Whatever the merits or demerits of Mrs. Montagu's Essay, Dr. Johnson's criticism of it when it appeared in 1769 smacks of peevish animus. Cowper wrote of it : " The learning, the good sense, the sound judgment and the wit displayed in it fully justify not only my compliment but all compliments that either have been already paid to her talents or shall be paid hereafter. Voltaire, I doubt not, rejoiced that his antagonist wrote in English and that his countrymen could not possibly be judges of the dispute." Johnson, while admitting that he had only read the end of the book, and while allowing that "*ad hominem* it was conclusive against Voltaire," and that "she had done, Sir, what she intended to do," told Sir Joshua Reynolds that while it did Mrs. Montagu honour it would do nobody else honour, and that he "would venture to say there is not one sentence of true criticism in her book." It is much to venture this of a book one has not read; and Boswell is constrained to protest too much in saying that it was Johnson's "honest opinion unbiassed by any prejudice or any proud jealousy of a woman intruding herself into the chair of criticism," thereby putting into words the very suggestion that has probably occurred to most of his readers.

Apart from Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Montagu's Essay had many admirers. "The *Critical Review*," she writes to Mrs. Carter in June, "has praised the Essay far beyond not only its deserts but my conceit of its deserts. I hope, therefore, the work will obtain a good character." Dr. Hugh Blair, the Scottish Divine and critic of Ossian, Sir Joshua Reynolds and others wrote and spoke strongly in its praise, and the following from Lord Lyttelton conveys a cachet of approval from one from the malice of whose impish pen Mrs. Montagu did not always escape.

HILL STREET, *May 23rd*, 1769.

I wish you joy of Mr. Walpole's admiring your Essay, which I hear he does greatly, and has given the Tone upon it to all his Connexion. This is very good news; for he is at present the Gentleman Usher on Parnassus, without whose hand a female Writer can't be decently introduced to the Court of Apollo, either in France or in England. Indeed I believe he does not guess your Sex: but it is possible that he may. I hear I have still the honour of your Book in many Coffee houses and at some tea tables. That is very flattering to me, but depend upon it, fair Lady, you will be found out at last, and then you must have recourse to what other fair Ladies who are found out have recourse to, setting a good face upon it, and declaring you think it is neither Sin nor Shame.

The Female Writer was herself naturally pleased by this reception. She had written very candidly in 1766:

> I talk as vainly as a Haberdasher of small wares would do who should compare himself to a merchant and say *we tradesmen.* But if it were not for a little vanity, could one set down to write a needless thing on a mans works who has been dead so many years. I wish Mr. Johnson had publishd a year ago or had kept his peice *ten* years, giving a year of grace beyond what Horace advises.

Now she writes:

> The courtesy of the Reviewers is prodigious; after many civil things they add that in its kind it is as classical a performance as any this age has produced. The word classical sticks in my throat; alas! did these gentlemen know the first rudiments of the authors learning were working a Sampler, what would they say? I was afraid these Reviewers would have been severe, but they have hurt me only by undeserved commendation. I am glad to find they do not guess the Author; they talk of *him* till they make me feel whether I have not a beard on my chin.

Mrs. Draper, Sterne's Eliza, by the way, refers to the Essay with rapture in her long letter to Mrs. James, written from India in April 1772.

In a volume of Anderdon's *Collectanea* "Mr. Sheridan's compliment" is thus transcribed:

> Our hearts are pledgd to Montagu's applause
> While Shakespeare's spirit seems to aid her cause,
> Well pleasd to aid, since on his sacred bier
> This female hand did ample trophies rear,
> And gave the *greatest* laurel worshipd there.

Sir Egerton Brydges also wrote enthusiastically, later on:

> Her Essay on Shakespeare is a very eloquent and beautiful piece of criticism which none but an author of great genius could have produced.

Except for a few casual references, there is a long hiatus in the evidence of Mrs. Montagu's association with the Doctor, after the publication of the Shakespeare Essay; and the next letter merely refers, in the Great Man's inimitable style, to a neglected invitation to a dinner at Hill Street:

From Samuel Johnson

Jan. 11, 1774.

MADAM — Having committed one fault by inadvertence, I will not committ another by Sullenness. When I had the honour of your card, I could not comply with your invitation, and must now suffer the Shame of confessing that the necessity of an answer did not come into my mind.

This omission, Madam, you may safely excuse, as the consciensness of your own character must secure you from suspecting that the favour of your notice can ever miss a suitable return, but from ignorance or thoughtlessness, and to be ignorant of your eminence is not easy but to him who lives out of the reach of the publick voice.—I am Madam, Your most obedient and most humble Servant SAM: JOHNSON.

Mrs. Montagu's untiring benevolence and tenderhearted compassion for the illnesses and misfortunes of all with whom she came in contact are amongst the pleasantest features of her character. Her immediate response to Dr. Johnson's appeal on behalf of Mrs. Williams has already been mentioned. On coming into Mr. Montagu's possessions at his death in May 1775, his widow at once made provision for more than one necessitous acquaintance, including Anna Williams, for whom she arranged an immediate annuity, which evoked the following acknowledgement:

From Mrs. Williams

MADAM—Often Have I heard of Generosity, Benevolence & Compassion, but never have I known or experienc'd the reality of those virtues, till this joyfull morning when I received the honour of your most tender & Affectionate Letter, with its most wellcome contents, Madam I may with truth say I have not words to express my Gratitude as I ought, to a Lady whose bounty has by one act of benevolence doubled my Income, & whose tender Compassionate Assurances has removed the future anxiety of trusting to Chance, the terror of which only could have prompted me to stand a publick Candidate for Mr. Hetherington's Bounty.

May my sincere & gratefull thanks be accepted by you, & may the Author of all good bless & long Continue a Life whose shining Virtues are so Conspicuous & Exemplary, is the most ardent Prayer of her who is with the greatest respect, Madam, Y^{r} most Devoted truly Obliged & obedient Humble Servant,

ANNA WILLIAMS.

JOHNSON'S COURT, *June 26th*, 1775.

At the end of 1775 Mrs. Montagu again invited Dr. Johnson to Hill Street, and received response as follows:

From Dr. Johnson

All that the show and reverence of mankind can give you has been long in your possession, but the little that I can add to the voice of nations will not much exalt you; of that little however you are, I hope very certain.

I wonder Madam if you remember Coll in the Hebrides'. The brother and heir of poor Coll has just been to visit me and I have engaged to dine with him on Thursday. I do not know his lodging and cannot send him a message, and must therefore suspend the honour, which you are pleased to offer, to Madam, Your most Humble Servant SAM: JOHNSON.

December 17th, 1775.

Mrs. Montagu promptly repeated the invitation, and Johnson replied offering himself for any day after the following Tuesday:

"I know not," he added, "when any letter has given me so much pleasure or vexation as that which I had yesterday the pleasure of receiving. That you, Madam should wish for my company, is surely a sufficient reason for being pleased; that I should delay twice what I had so little right to expect even once has so bad an appearance that I can only hope to have it thought that I am ashamed."

It is evident from references in the subsequent letters that Dr. Johnson was frequently among the guests at Mrs. Montagu's gatherings in Hill Street, and was treated with a reverential respect, which undoubtedly pleased him, though he might be loth to avow it. "One evening at Mrs. Montagu's," writes Dr. Maxwell, "where a splendid company was assembled, consisting of the most eminent literary characters, I thought he seemed highly pleased with the respect and attention that were shown him, and asked him on our return home if he was not highly *gratified* by his visit: 'No Sir, (said he) not highly *gratified*; yet I do not recollect to have passed many evenings *with fewer objections*.'" "Mrs. Montagu," he told Mrs. Thrale, "is *par pluribus*. Conversing with her you may find *variety in one*," which is a more complimentary reference than Mrs. Montagu's, who, writing to Mrs. Vesey on February 1, 1778, says: "Mr. and Mrs. Thrale and Dr. Johnson dined with me on Thursday; but I do not relish my dinners now my Vesey is not a guest."

In the next letter which occurs, the Doctor is clearly on much easier terms with his hostess, and knows enough, of her generosity at least, to combine a request for a subscription with an apology for a cough:

From Dr. Johnson

MADAM—And so you are alarmed, naughty Lady; you might know that I was ill enough when Mr. Thrale brought you my excuse. Could you think that I missed the honour of being at [your] table for any slight reason? But you [have] too many to miss any one of us, and I am [proud] to be remembered at last.

I am much better. A little cough still remains which will not confine me. To houses, [like yours] of great delicacy I am not willing to bring it.

Now, dear Madam, we must talk of business. Poor Davies, the bankrupt Bookseller, is soliciting his Friends to collect a small sum for the repurchase of part of his household stuff. Several of them give him five guineas. It would be an honour to him, to owe part of his relief to Mrs. Montague.

Let me thank you, Madam, once more for your enquiry; You have perhaps among your numerous train, not [one] that values a kind word or a kind look more than Madam, Your most humble Servant SAM: JOHNSON.

March 5, 1778.

[A piece of this letter has been torn away, and the words in brackets inserted in a contemporary hand.]

In October 1778 Dr. Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale: "There is a print of Mrs. Montagu and I shall think myself very ill rewarded for my love and admiration, if she does not give me one; she will give it nobody in whom it will excite more respectful sentiments. But I never could get anything from her but by pushing a face; and so, if you please, you may tell her."

There was an engraved portrait of Mrs. Montagu by Townley after the picture by Miss Reynolds, and also a print from the medallion by Wedgwood.

In April 1780 compliments are still the order of the day, and we find the Doctor addressing Mrs. Thrale thus:

> Can you write such a letter as this, so miscellaneous with such noble disdain of a regularity like Shakespeare's works? such graceful negligence of translation like the ancient enthusiasts? The pure voice of nature and of friendship. Now of whom shall I proceed to speak? Of whom but Mrs. Montagu? Having mentioned Shakespeare and Nature, does not the name of Montagu force itself upon me?

That the Doctor's tongue was in his cheek when he wrote this it would be rash to deny; but he adds, in a letter of the following month: "Mrs. Montagu's long stay . . . is very convenient. You would, by your own confession, want a companion, and she is *par pluribus*."

To all this pretty compliment and adulation, however, the year 1781 brought a disastrous interruption, with the publication of the last volume of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, containing a brief biography of Mrs. Montagu's devoted friend the first Lord Lyttelton, who had died eight years previously. Reading this short and by no means scathing memoir to-day, one is frankly astonished at the fury of indignation and invective which its publication aroused amongst the *bas bleus* and the friends of that estimable Baron. The most incriminating paragraph, speaking of the *Dialogues of the Dead*, says:

> When they were first published they were kindly commended by the *Critical Reviewers*, and poor Lyttelton with humble gratitude, returned, in a note which I have read, acknowledgments which can never be proper, since they must be paid either for flattery or for justice.

No doubt the accent of "compassionate contempt" which is audible in this and one or two other passages rankled deeply with those who had lost in Lord Lyttelton an affectionate friend and an exemplary host; still the outcry which it raised seems out of all proportion to the gravity of the offence in a judgement which nowhere exceeds the bounds of legitimate criticism, and is interspersed with a good deal of unreserved if slight commendation. Walpole, of course, took a malign delight in aggravating matters. "At a blue-stocking meeting held by Lady Lucan, Mrs. Montagu and Johnson kept at different ends of the chamber and set up altar against altar there. She told me as a mark of her high displeasure that she would not ask him to dinner again. I took her aside and fomented the quarrel, and wished I could have made Dagon and Ashtaroth scold in coptic."

"Mrs. Montagu has dropped me," said Johnson. "Now sir, there are people whom one should like very well to drop, but would not wish to be dropped by."

And Boswell adds, "He certainly was vain of the society of ladies and could make himself very agreeable to them, when he chose it."

In the forefront of this teacup fray was Mr. Weller Pepys, Master in Chancery, and a devoted ally of Mrs. Montagu's. Infected by Mr. Walpole's malice, I cannot resist quoting part of a letter of Mrs. Montagu's to Mr. Pepys, partly at least because it gives a delicious example of feminine fury momentarily explosive and entirely alien to the dear lady's normal temperament:

To Mr. Pepys

HILLSTREET, *Nov. 3rd*, 1781.

What I have said of my boy [Matthew, her nephew and adopted child] may seem to proceed from the vanity of my heart, but as I know how kindly and generously you interest yourself for him, I would have you, and I, believe it flow'd from benevolence. May he be worthy of the esteem of such as Mr. Pepys, and the envy, and the malice, and the railing, of such wretches as Dr. Johnson, who bear in their hearts the secret hatred of hypocrites to genuine virtue, and the contempt of Pedants for real genius. But no more at present on so odious a subject as the Doctor and his malicious falsehoods. I wish his figure was put as a frontispiece to his works, his squinting look and monstrous form would well explain his character. Those disgraces which make a good mind humble and complacent, ever render a bad one envious and ferocious. Lady M: Wortley Montagu says of a deformd Person who had satirized her, "Twas in the uniformity of fate, that one so hateful should be born to hate."

This was really very naughty of our good lady; and Boswell, "drunk or sober," shone with comparative benignity when he wrote to the *Gazette* deprecating all mention of the Doctor's infirmities of body and eccentricities of manner, which he compared to odious wens placed upon a statue.

Sir Egerton Brydges is probably right in saying "Mrs. Montagu was too fine a lady really to reconcile herself to the manners of Dr. Johnson."

There is evidence that more than one of the ladies who entertained Dr. Johnson suffered a good deal from the eccentricities of his person and manners. Miss Hawkins speaks of his loose-hung clothes, his brown hands, his deep roar when he meant to be civil, his rolling head and bushy wig; Miss Reynolds describes his extraordinary gesticulations and antics, his lack of delicacy in eating and the displeasing faces he made; "his corporeal defects also contributed largely to the singularity of his manners; and a little reflection on the disqualifying influence of blindness and deafness would suggest many apologies for Dr. Johnson's want of politeness."

His immense limbs, his convulsionary movements, his hard breathing, huge appetite and large mouthfuls undoubtedly made him "not appear to the best advantage at the hour of repast"; and a woman of Mrs. Montagu's delicacy had doubtless to pay severely for the honour of his entertainment. Even Boswell admits that "his appetite was so fierce, and indulged with such intenseness that while in the act of eating the veins of his forehead swelled and generally a strong perspiration was visible." A man who ate lobster sauce with plum pudding and "devoured a plateful of stewed carp with the assistance of his fingers only," must occasionally have shocked his hostesses. Yet the dear man told Boswell that "he had never been hungry but once," and whilst he protested to Mrs. Thrale that he was "well-bred to a degree of needless scrupulosity," she declared "he now devours my roast beef and plum pudden too dirtily for endurance."

The story of Dr. Johnson's attack on Mr. Weller Pepys at a dinner-party at the Thrales in June 1781 has been told at length by Fanny Burney in the first volume of her Diary, and Mr. Pepys' letter to Mrs. Montagu describing the fray has also been printed, and need not be reproduced here. Miss Burney says it was a terrible noisy day, and that never before had she seen Johnson speak with such passion. " Come forth, man ! " roared Johnson, purple in the face, across the table. " If you have anything to say, let's hear it. Come forth, man, when I call you ! " He was, Fanny admits, throughout, the aggressor, and Pepys tried in vain to get off the painful subject ; the latter never appeared to so much advantage, preserved his temper, uttered all that belonged to himself with great modesty and all that more immediately related to Lord Lyttelton with spirit ; and indeed the Doctor, whom Fanny declares to have been unreasonably furious and grossly severe, broke off in the very thick of the fray to compliment his antagonist :

" Sir, all that you say, while you are vindicating one who cannot thank you, makes me only think better of you than I ever did before. Yet still I think you do me wrong," etc., etc. Mrs. Thrale, after the battle had lasted through dinner, over the wine, and even when the men were summoned to tea, at last put a peremptory stop to the fight, declaring with spirit and dignity, that she should be very glad to hear no more of it ; and Mr. Pepys concludes his account thus : " We shook hands however at parting, which put me in mind of the parting between Jaques and Orlando. ' God be with you, let us meet as seldom as we can ! Fare you well, I hope we shall be better strangers ! ' We have not met again till last Tuesday, and then I must do him justice to say that he did all in his power to show that he was sorry for the former attack." Fanny Burney adds, " This dear violent Doctor was conscious he had been wrong, and therefore he most candidly bore Mrs. Thrale's reproof," for " she read him a very serious lecture upon giving way to such violence, which he bore with a patience and quietness that even more than made his peace with me."

It should be understood, in chronicling the record of this rather ridiculous dispute, that it was not Mrs. Montagu, but some other friends of Lyttelton's who had led the attack on Dr. Johnson. Indeed Mrs. Montagu's letters show clearly that, deeply as she resented what she conceived to be the Doctor's malice and uncharitableness, she did what she could to mitigate and suppress the violence of the resentment to which it gave rise. Writing on August 14, 1781, to Mr. Pepys from Sandleford, she says :

> I am very glad you had a battle with Dr. Johnson ; he is too vain to guess the odium and contempt he has incurred by his character of Lord Lyttelton and some other men whose works deserved a better critic, and lives a more candid biographer. I should express myself more fully on the subject but that when mankind take vengeance for a misdemeanour that vengeance is commonly too severe. Some friends to one of the poets he has ill treated have begun such a satyrical account of Johnson's person and manner, and so ridiculous a representation of his style, etc., etc., as will make him run mad if published. The specimens I have seen are very clever, but tho I am angry with Dr. Johnson I would be angry and sin not, and I have charitably endeavoured to get this work (which by the bye I understand to be the joint labour of many) delayed till his death at least. I am sure our good friend Lord Lyttelton would not have approved such bitter revenge for the injurious treatment his memory has received from the Doctor. . . . The persons who have undertaken the chastisement of Johnson are not friends of Lord Lyttelton only, more than every man who is traduced, but their wits belong to a set of more satirical geniuses. I am not at liberty to communicate more than I have hinted.

Altogether to us who are outside the ropes, it was an amusing and characteristic rubber, revealing, as a good fight should, the best and the worst of both sides ; and if some think the final score showed honours easy, others in more modern parlance may consider it as a round of no trumps.

A subsequent conversation of Fanny Burney's with Mr. Cambridge gives the aftermath :

"It was behaving ill to Mrs. Thrale," said Cambridge, "certainly, to quarrel in her house."

"Yes," replied Fanny; "but he never repeated it, though he wished of all things to have gone through just such another scene with Mrs. Montagu, and to refrain was an act of heroic forbearance."

"Why, I rather wonder he did not; for she was the head of the set of Lytteltonians."

"Oh, he knows that; he calls Mr. Pepys only her Prime Minister."

"And what does he call her?"

"Queen! to be sure! 'Queen of the Blues!' She came to Streatham one morning, and I saw he was dying to attack her. But he had made a promise to Mrs. Thrale to have no more quarrels in her house, and so he forced himself to forbear. Indeed he was very much concerned when it was over, for what had passed, and very candid and generous in acknowledging it. He is too noble to adhere to wrong."

"And how did Mrs. Montagu herself behave?"

"Very stately indeed at first. She turned from him very stiffly and with a most distant air, and without even courtesying to him, and with a firm intention to keep to what she had publicly declared—that she would never speak to him more! However he went up to her himself, longing to begin! and very roughly said—'Well, madam, what's become of your fine new house? I hear no more of it?'"

"But how did she bear this?"

"Why, she was obliged to answer him; and she soon grew so frightened—as everybody does—that she was as civil as ever."

Being frightened was perhaps more in pretty Fanny's way than Mrs. Montagu's, amongst whose failings nervousness was never conspicuous. But Dr. Johnson undoubtedly did frighten the ladies at times. Mrs. Thrale says: "His eyes, though of a light grey colour, were so wild, so piercing and at times so fierce, that fear was, I believe, the first emotion in the hearts of all his beholders." And indeed he is still, for many of us, so awe-inspiring that we dare scarcely say so when we feel that he behaved like a brute and a bully, as at times he undoubtedly did. Whom he loved he certainly chastened ; and one might find it hard to forgive much that he said and did about David Garrick, for instance, if one did not recall Cumberland's glimpse of him, bathed in tears by the Abbey graveside where his " little David " lay.

And so the reconciliation began, though I doubt if it was ever complete. Dr. Johnson came to assemblies at the " fine new house," of which Mrs. Montagu took possession at the end of 1781, but there are few further references of any particular interest, and it is evident that the ladies found the great Doctor's presence at their coteries a little overwhelming.

Mrs. Montagu, at the end of a long letter to Mrs. Vesey in 1782, says :

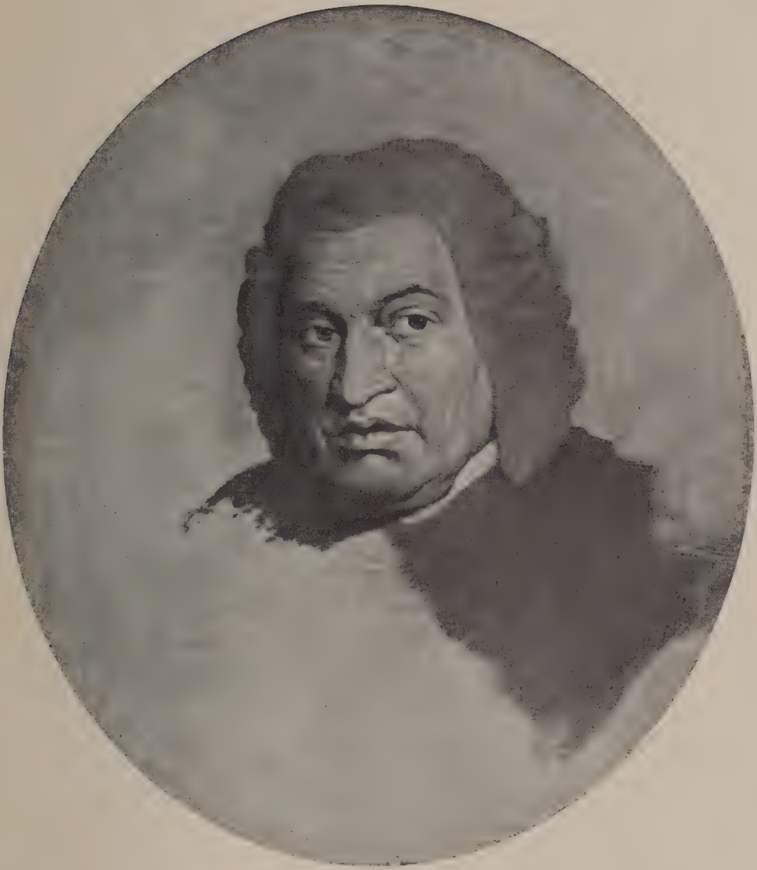
> . . . The same disagreable controul have I felt when a circle of polite and gay assembled in your blue room and have been pleasantly reciting the gaiety of a ball or the elegance of an entertainment, and the great Dr. Johnson has thundered a declamation in words so harsh of sound and obscure in sense as would have better suited a description of the orgies of Erethro or the dire incantations of Medea.

Poor Mr. Pepys, however, could not get over his drubbing just yet :

From W. Pepys

Tunbridge Wells, *October 5th,* 1781.

. . . I confess to you that I felt myself check'd in my Resentment against Johnson, as by the Admonition of a superior Power, when I read your Application of the Words " Be angry and sin not " and cou'd not help exclaiming " How admirable is it to see the Person who perhaps is most angry, and Who has certainly the most reason to be so, the Foremost to



DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

Unfinished sketch by James Barry

restrain, not only Her own Emotions but those of Others, within the bounds of Justice and Humanity !

But, my dear Madam ; what hurts me all this while, is not that Johnson shou'd go unpunish'd, but that our dear and respectable Friend shou'd go down to Posterity with that artful and studied Contempt thrown upon his Character which He so little deserv'd, and that a Man Who (notwithstanding the little Foibles he might have) was in my Opinion One of the most exalted Patterns of Virtue, Liberality, and Benevolence, not to mention the high Rank which He held in Literature, shou'd be handed down to succeeding Generations under the Appelation of *poor Lyttelton* ! This, I must own, vexes and disquiets me whenever I think of it, and had I the command of half your Powers, temper'd as they are with that true Moderation and Justice, He shou'd not sleep within his silent Grave, I do not say unreveng'd (because that is not what I wish) but unvindicated, and unrescued from that Contempt which has been so industriously and so injuriously thrown upon Him. But enough of this subject, which must be disagreeable to Us Both.

The old grievance was reawakened by Robert Potter's *Inquiry into some Passages in Johnson's Lives*, which appeared in 1783 ; and its echoes are heard in several letters of that year, including one from Lord Hardwicke, who writes in June : " It has given me a bad opinion of Dr. Johnson's heart, because he had no *provocation* and went out of his way to vent spleen and ill nature."

In another letter he adds :

I am very Glad to find that Mr. Potter has taken up the Pen for our *Friend Ld Lyttelton* agst Dr. Johnson, but It is not half enough, for He only exposes a *ridiculous Idea* abt his envying Mr. Shenstones *Seasons.*

I have just been reading a more severe but less *correct* Pamphlet in wch the Drs Injustice to Ld L. is further exposed —I believe It writ by a Scotchman. It is entitled *Deformitys of Dr. S. J.* and they come to a 2d Edit.

Dr. Johnson's *Lives* produced a number of " Remarks," " Observations," and " Cursory Examinations." The " Deformities," selected from his works, which was published in Edinburgh in 1782, is attributed to Callender, a vicious journalist, one of whose pamphlets led to a prosecution.

Mrs. Montagu has been so unfairly represented by her critics as the instigator and the ring-leader of the violent attacks on Johnson that it is worth while to quote here a passage from a letter of hers to Mrs. William Robinson, written in June 1783:

> Mr. Potter has also ably vindicated his friend Mr. Gray's Odes; &c., from cruel and unjust criticism, and this is done with great wit, taste and good manners—ingredients rarely put into the bitters of criticism. Modern wits and modern orators are apt to fall into the Billingsgate style; and from every kind of chastisement made more severe and outrageous than the fault it should correct, one takes the part of the culprit against the harshness of the corrector.

To Lord Hardwicke she wrote to the same effect, admitting that she had been much entertained by the chastisement from the Doctor's Scotch adversary, but preferred Mr. Potter's vindication, who "has used the rod so mercifully and after having fully proved the Doctor guilty of envy and ignorance, that the reader takes it up where he lays it down, and *the poor Doctor* will have a lash through the whole . . . of poets at least" (Addl. MSS. 35620, p. 239). The italics are ours, and poor Lyttelton is avenged.

In September 1783 Johnson's old friend and Mrs. Montagu's annuitant, Mrs. Anna Williams, died, and the Doctor wrote as follows to Mrs. Montagu:

From Dr. Johnson

Madam—That respect which is always due to benevolence makes it fit that you should be informed otherwise than by the papers that on the 6th of this month died your pensioner Anna Williams, of whom it may truly be said that she received your bounty with gratitude and enjoyed it with propriety. You perhaps have still her prayers. You have the satisfaction of having alleviated the sufferings of a woman of great merit both intellectual and moral. Her curiosity was universal, her knowledge was very extensive, and she sustained forty years of misery with steady fortitude. Thirty years and more she had been my companion, and her death has left me very desolate. That I have not written sooner you may impute to absence, to ill health, to anything rather than want of regard to the Benefactrice of my departed friend.—I am, Madam, Your most humble Servant SAM: JOHNSON.

Sept. 22, 1783.

The Doctor said he had "a very kind answer from Mrs. Montagu, a letter not only civil but tender, so I hope peace is proclaimed. I am now come to that time when I wish all bitterness and animosity to be at an end. I have never done her any serious harm, nor would I;—though I could give her a bite! but she must provoke me much first. In volatile talk, indeed, I may have spoken of her not much to her mind; for in the tumult of conversation malice is apt to grow sprightly; and there I hope I am not yet decrepid!"

Johnson died on December 13th of the following year, and I have not found any noteworthy references in the intervening period, and indeed only one allusion to his death, which shows that though their quarrel had never been forgotten or its cause forgiven, time had somewhat softened the asperity of Mrs. Montagu's rancour against the critic of her old friend.

Writing from Bath on December 20 she says:

The news will inform you that Living Poets need not fear Dr. Johnson should write their memoirs after they are no longer able to refute calumny. I hear he dyed with great piety and resignation; and indeed he had many virtues, and perhaps, ill health and narrow circumstances gave him a peevish censorious turn. I am afraid Mrs. Thrales imprudent marriage shortend his life. Her letters to her Friends from abroad were full of her felicity, it is said accounts are now come that she is confined in a convent at Milan. Her Husband says she is insane, he is the only Person in the World who can say it with an ill grace.

So ends the story of Elizabeth Montagu's intercourse with the great Lexicographer. Nothing that gives us any fresh bit of insight—however small—into that wonderful epitome of humanity that was Johnson, can be uninteresting ; and no apology is therefore needed for having sketched this episode (though by no means at full length) in greater detail than can be spared to others. But its interest is not merely that of a forgotten Essay or an unnecessary feud. It goes deeper than that ; for it illuminates the characters of both its protagonists. If we get the overbearing masterfulness of the man, reaching very close to brutality, we have also his generous contrition, his fine because so difficult restraint ; while with the lady's staunch loyalty and genuine benevolence we have glimpses that are deliciously feminine, and even occasionally feline. Let the last word for once be with the man, for it is a noble and fitting one. In May 1784, within a few months of his death, Dr. Johnson, who "was in fine spirits," was telling Boswell of his dinner, the night before, with three notable ladies—Mrs. Carter, Miss Hannah More, and Miss Fanny Burney. Boswell suggested that Mrs. Montagu might well have made a fourth. Johnson : "Sir, Mrs. Montagu does not make a trade of her wit ; but Mrs. Montagu is a very extraordinary woman ; she has a constant stream of conversation, and it is always impregnated ; it has always meaning."

NOTE

It should be mentioned here that the letters of Dr. Johnson to Mrs. Montagu of December 17, 1775, March 5, 1778, and September 22, 1783, and the one from Mrs. Williams are quoted above either from the originals or from copies in Mrs. Climenson's Montagu MSS. collection. They were lent by Lord Rokeby to Mr. Croker for his 1831 edition of Boswell's *Life*, in which they were interpolated ; but as they were not very accurately transcribed, and as they pertain essentially to the subject of this paper, it seemed proper to include them here. Johnson's handwriting is firm, upright, and full of character; he used a rather broad-pointed quill, employed the long "S," and, usually, a reversed "e," which is at times puzzling; but his letters as a rule are very clear, well spaced, and legible; the subscription and signature sometimes occupy a whole page, and the date follows at the bottom.

In these days of meticulous spelling it may surprise the precisians and comfort some who are prone to variety in this particular to be assured that the Doctor in his letters didn't always conform to the orthography of Johnson's *Dictionary*.

Probably because I have never attained to it, I have always looked upon orthodox spelling as a very dull and mean accomplishment; and have rather enjoyed the casual variety of the older writers who would spell the same word three different ways in a letter, and were not too sure even about their own names. Consequently it was for me a real satisfaction to know that Dr. Johnson wrote "pamflets" and "harrassed" and "barels" and "acknowledgement" and "enervaiting" and "devide" and many other things like that; could spell John Nichols' surname at least four different ways, when he wrote to him, and never allowed even Boswell to have his second "l."

I do not know who penned the letter from poor, blind, peevish Anna Williams. Malone and others have testified that she moved about the house, searched drawers, found books, and did much else unaided; and Boswell retracted the story that when pouring out tea she put her finger in the cup to feel if it was filled; she knew by the warmth of the outside. Lady Knight, who knew her well, and with whom she had stayed on several occasions, says that she possessed several of her letters, "written with great good sense and simplicity, and with a tenderness and affection that far excel all that is called politeness and elegance." But clever as she was, one can hardly suppose that she was able to write letters herself. The one quoted is written in a clear sloping hand, the lines evenly spaced, the margins exact, the signature by the same hand, the "t's" and "i's" accurately crossed and dotted.

Mrs. Desmoulins did not, I think, become an inmate of Dr. Johnson's house till 1778, and the pugnacious Poll Carmichael appears there about the same time. Possibly it was old Robert Levett of the "corrugated visage" who may have acted as Mrs. Williams's scribe. We know that latterly he rather befriended her—chiefly because they were united in fierce hostility to the other women in that strange asylum of the generous old Doctor.

1784

THE ALISON AND PIOZZI MARRIAGES—FOX, PITT, THE PRINCE OF WALES

William Hoare's pictures. A bathing dress. The Duchess of Devonshire canvassing for Fox. Miss Gregory's engagement. Mrs. Montagu's opposition. The marriage takes place. Miss Keppel. Mr. Pitt's taxes. Mrs. Thrale's marriage. The Alison wedding and Mr. Pulteney. The Primate at Sandleford. Sir John Burgoyne. The Duchess's tooth. Lady Strathmore. Candle tax. The Prince of Wales. Louis Weltjie at Brighton. Mrs. Vesey at Margate. Dr. Beattie at Sandleford. Mrs. Arbuthnot. Mr. Vesey's illness. The Poetical Milkwoman.

William Hoare, the portrait painter, best known for his crayon drawings of celebrated people, who was now about seventy-seven, was still, it seems, actively at work. Sir William Robinson writes to his cousin from Bath in February 1784:

> Mr. Hoare is an uncomon genious at his time of Life, he has finished lately 2 capital pictures in craons, a Venus different from all other painters, also a Diana, his Venus in my Eye beyond Titians, his Diana, with the Beauty of a Venus all the chaste delicasy of one of the Graces. I have been so taken with it, I have purchased it or a copy, and hope some day or other, it may rest in Montagu house, I know it will charm Montagu, and with propriety also.
>
> Your picture here, is still better altered, than Ld. Hardwicks by the improvem^{ts} he has made, indeed he has 2 excellent judges that spirits him up in all his performances, his good Wife, and amiable Daughter. This place still continues very full, and the Rooms never fail filling, in spite of Frost, Snow, and cold, or want of money, for every thing you take a fancy to.

The portrait of Mrs. Montagu was commissioned by Lord Hardwicke and hung at Wimpole between Lord Chesterfield and Dr. Johnson. The lady professed herself highly flattered, though one may doubt if the position exactly suited her.

In a letter from Miss Gregory, who had gone north in a hurry in April to the deathbed of her sister-in-law at Edinburgh, occurs a quaint little passage which reveals an amusing example of eighteenth-century prudery.

> May I beg the favour of you to desire Sally to pack up my black habit and all the black things I told her of along with my *bathing dress*, and send them by the stage coach immediately for it is not in nature that Mrs. Gregory can be alive at the time you read this letter ; and I find there is a cold bath in the house. Miss Gordon thinks I shall do well to make use of it, but as I was not aware of such a thing being in the house I did not bring my bathing dress with me.

Forty years before, Mrs. Montagu herself as a girl had with great difficulty secured a bathing tub which could be made to hold water at the ducal house of Bulstrode, and wrote : " My bathing tub is ready for use, so to-morrow I shall go in. Pray look for my bathing dress ; till then I must go in in chemise and jupon." One knew that baths were very scarce luxuries even in the abodes of duchesses, but one had hardly realised that, even when a tub was attainable, too intimate an association between soap and water and the skin was by no means considered *comme il faut*.

Of the coming General Election and of the favours dispensed by the lovely Duchess there is this note :

> The Duchess of Devonshire has been canvassing in a most masculine manner and has met with much abuse. I hope we shall succeed at York and in the country. I have done my endeavours where I had the smallest interest and my men will all be *Pittmen* !

The " Piccadilly Beauty canvassing for Fox in some of the most blackguard houses in Long Acre" made excellent copy for the scribblers. Seven years previously Mrs. Montagu—who, by the way, was not a bad gossip herself on occasion—had lamented the growing love of scandal. "It is now got from the gossips' teatable to the press. The scribblers weekly let fly their popguns at the Duchess of Devonshire's feathers. Her grace is innocent, good humoured and beautifull; but these adders are blind and deaf and cannot be charmed."

The Duchess and Lady Melbourne had been leading spirits in 1781 in establishing the vogue of the Duchess of Cumberland's Thursday drawing-rooms, whereat the Opposition and the Prince of Wales, backed by the Luttrells and Mrs. Armstead, set up a more or less open defiance of the King. Wraxall, writing of the Duchess at this time, says: "Her personal charms constituted her smallest pretension to universal admiration, nor did her beauty consist like that of the Gunnings in regularity of features and faultless formation of limbs and shape; it lay in the amenity and graces of her deportment, in her irresistible manners and the seduction of her society. Her hair was not without a tinge of red; and her face though pleasing yet had it not been illuminated by her mind might have been considered as an ordinary countenance." He says that she succeeded Lady Melbourne in the attachment of the Prince of Wales, "but of what nature and what limits attached by the Duchess must remain matter of conjecture." In the canvass for Fox's election, "having associated to the execution her sister Viscountess Duncannon who participated the duchess's political enthusiasm; these ladies [their hats trimmed with fox-brushes], being previously furnished with lists of outlying voters drove to their respective dwellings. Neither entreaties nor promises were spared. In some instances even personal caresses were said to have been permitted in order to prevail on the surly or inflexible; and there can be no doubt of common mechanics having been conveyed to the hustings on more than one occasion by the duchess, in her own coach."

Such seduction was irresistible and decisive. Fox, who had fallen a hundred votes behind Sir Cecil, now passed him by an equal number, and though the ministerial party put up Lady Salisbury as a rival canvasser, youth and charm won the day handsomely. Fox's election procession carried a banner "Sacred to Female Patriotism"; and in the evening entertainment at Lower Grosvenor Street, where all were habited in blue and buff, Mrs. Crewe, the charming hostess, who had exerted herself as enthusiastically as the Duchess, was toasted by the Prince of Wales, "True Blue and Mrs. Crewe," to which she immediately responded with another equally laconic: "True Blue and all of you."

Miss Gregory being in Edinburgh, Mr. Alison vigorously renewed his attentions, which were entirely approved by her relations and friends, so soon as any preferment could be obtained for him. This Mr. Pulteney, with whom he was well acquainted, promised to the extent of a living of £150 a year and a house, but expressed great anxiety that Mrs. Montagu's approbation should be secured; and the poor girl now indited to her patroness a long and moving appeal. Mr. Smelt also wrote to convince her of Alison's high character and implore her consent. Our good lady was evidently very greatly perturbed at this recrudescence of an affair which she perhaps hoped had fallen into abeyance; and no less than three first copies remain (the only instance I have found of any, except to Lydia Sterne), with slight alterations and erasures, of the letter which was, after some delay, despatched. In it she frankly admits that she would have made no objection to her nephew marrying Miss

Gregory, but again rehearses with emphasis all the obstacles she saw to the present match, and can only bring herself to conclude: " My consent in your case is not necessary, for I have not any pretence to legal authority. . . . I have only to add that I heartily wish you happiness and rejoice that a consent I could not give without incurring the blame and reproach of my own mind and hazard of the welfare of others, is unnecessary. My most fervent prayers for your happiness you will ever have. . . ."

To many it will doubtless seem that since Miss Gregory was plainly determined to marry Mr. Alison and no one else, something more immediately effectual than fervent prayers might have been generously forthcoming from the rich and childless widow, who had virtually adopted her as from her father's death. But it is evident that Mrs. Montagu was still intensely annoyed that one whom she had thus honoured should have deliberately chosen penury with the man she loved, and declined affluence with the much-adored nephew, to whom she remained perversely indifferent.

On June 19 Miss Gregory became Mrs. Alison, Mr. Pulteney going to Sudborough (Northamptonshire) to " give her away." Mrs. Montagu was made quite ill and sleepless " after so great a shock as the indiscretion and unkindness of a young person for whom I had hardly less than maternal care," and could only find solace in looking forward to an approaching visit from her beloved Primate from Ireland; which was at the moment a very good country to be leaving, as his brother makes clear in a letter from Bath of June 27:

> At present he's clearly of opinion this Country is preferable to Dublin ; the day he left Dublin, the good folks began *tarring* and *feathering* a Taylor—for presuming to cut an English Cloth, a proclimation is this day sent the Primate from Dublin from the Lord Lieutent & privy Council offering a reward of 500 to discover the authors ; some of the low Irish

here remark that they will wager £500 no person in Ireland will discover any of the Authors, or Abettors ; Im afraid this is too often the case on the committing many crimes. . . .

Having lost her "charioteer," Mrs. Montagu was now to be the recipient of another kind of "whiskey":

> The Primate accquaints me he has lately sent me to London an addition of right usqubagh ; you certainly shall have a proportion for self, or friends in distress of the gout complaints.

Meanwhile Leonard Smelt and his wife visited Sandleford, and were taken to see Chaucer's Castle, Lord Porchester's [Donnington Castle] and also Lord Craven's Park [Highclere] before leaving for the Dean of Christchurch at Oxford, where "tho' good Protestants I am afraid they will worship Sir Joshua Reynolds' Angels."

In July her sister wrote to her from town:

> I understand that it is Lord Southamptons eldest Son who is married to Miss Keppel, if so, surely there is no great harm on either side, as she may expect a good fortune from her Mother ; but the Parents are not inclined to accomodate them at present. The P of W lent them one of his carriages for their expedition, and went to Mrs. Keppel in order to bring about a reconciliation, but she refused to receive or even to see them, upon which his R—l Hss said then he must, and shou'd order an apartment to be prepared for them in Carleton House ; a threat, which had I been the Brides Mother I shou'd have thought most tremendous ; perhaps she did so, for it appears that they were at their return remained at her house. . . .
>
> Mr. Pitt seems to go on triumphantly ; the news papers abuse his taxes, but in company one hears them generally approved. The Window tax is no doubt a very heavy one, but if it will give power of doing anything very essential towards the stopping of smugling I imagine it will be a very essential benefit to the nation. Livery tax must be severely felt by some Individuals, yet productive taxes must be laid. That on Ribbons and Gauzes delights me much. The Papers have told you the P of W has been ill. The cause was his contriving when on horse back to get pinn'd between two Carriages by which one side of him was violently bruisd, and

a fever ensued, and he was extremely ill. I suppose he was at the time in no very sober state.

George Ferdinand, 2nd Baron Southampton, was nephew of the 3rd Duke of Grafton, and Groom of the Stole to the Prince of Wales. Laura Keppel was daughter of the Bishop of Exeter and niece of the Admiral, now Viscount Keppel.

Young Pitt, now Chancellor of the Exchequer, and determined to bring order into the chaotic finance of the country, was suppressing smuggling with a strong hand; but recognising that the excessive duty (119 per cent) on tea was at the bottom of much of the trouble, he reduced this to 12½ per cent, and made up part of the loss to the exchequer by increasing the window tax, a levy more difficult to evade. Mrs. Montagu's reply, it will be noted, forecasts our twentieth-century Entertainment Tax.

> I find the Heir apparent is getting well again, but I think the most extortionary Jew could not ask many years purchase for an annuity for his life.
>
> I am glad Mr. Pitt goes on so well. Taxes are always disagreable tho' necessary. I approve much of the gauze and ribbon tax, and the putting an end to the smuggling may be very beneficial. A tax on candles is a tax on industry. . . . If the hard ware trade at Birmingham and the Staffordshire ware shd be hurt by the tax on coals it wd be unfortunate, and I fear this tax will discourage the Vend for Coals which was opening to Paris. The Brick tax tho it affects my Ladyship who was a Builder yet I think it may be useful if it rather checks the increase of the Capital of the Kingdom. The Theatres and all places of publick Diversion ought to be considerably tax'd, and a higher tax on Licenses for Alehouses wd be a publick benefit. I approve much the Tax on Licenses to kill Game, for Partridges and pheasants are not among the necessarys of Life. Having gamekeepers in several counties and places I shall pay roundly but willingly to this tax.

Mrs. Scott was now the town mouse, and charged to keep her Sandleford sister posted in the doings of the world, a task for which she was admirably qualified.

Mrs. Thrale's marriage to Piozzi took place on July 25, and naturally formed a prime subject of comment and gossip:

I have just heard that Miss Rodney is gone to Scotland with Capt Chambers Sr Williams Son, and Mr. Rodney with Lady —— Nugent, Lady Berkeleys Daughter. It is doubtful whether the Brother and Sister knew each others intentions, if not they may reconnoitre each other with some surprize at Gretna-Green. This is a year for imprudent marriages. I gave you an erroneous account of Mrs. Thrales. Piozzi it seems was in holy Orders. She gave him £4000 a year ago with which he went abroad, it is supposed to purchase a Dispensation, and is but lately return'd. She came up to London and sent her Daughters to Brightelmstone. She was married last week at a Roman Catholic Chapel in London, is gone to Bath where they are to have the ceremony repeated in a Protestant Church. As soon as the friends of the family learnt her fix'd purpose they informed her the Children must not remain with her, and fetched them from Brighthelmstone, where they were under the care of a Person little older than Miss Thrale. I suppose you may have heard the same account of Mrs. Alisons marriage that I have, but as it was told me by a person to whom Dr Gregory (who was in Town last week, and perhaps is still) related it you shall have it as I had. Miss Gregory with her Brother or Brothers, Mrs. Gordon, and I believe Mr. Nairn, set out from Scotland to be married at Mr. Alisons Parish Church in Northamptonshire. At the last stage before they reachd it Mr. Pulteney met them, and when they set off he took Miss Gregory in his Chaise. As they proceeded he informd her he had fail'd in his endeavours to procure Mr. Alison a Living, but presented her with a draught on his Banker for £150 and with a settlement of the same sum yearly, for her to draw on the same Banker for till he could get him a living. To this he added notes for £150 for her wedding cloathes ; and a special License, with which they were married at a house of his at Sudborough, where they are to dwell. He had written to them not to think of furniture, for that their Parsonage house was furnish'd. Tho' this proceeding may be very generous in Mr. Pulteney, yet I cannot forbear pitying Mrs. Alison, as one would wish to have it in ones choice whether to accept an obligation, as there are few from whom it can be accepted with pleasure, but after all that had pass'd she had no alternative. I own it appears to me being very painfully taken in. However Dr Gregory speaks of it with joy and gratitude, and for the sake of her ease of mind I hope she feels the same ; one is not to suppose the sensation of others must be the same as ones own.

Captain John Rodney, R.N., son of the gallant admiral by his second wife, married Catherine Nugent, only daughter of the 6th Earl of Westmeath, on July 4; and on the same day his sister Jane was married to George Chambers, son of the architect of Somerset House.

Mrs. Montagu's wrath over the Gregory marriage took a long time to subside ; and, as the following letter shows, " poor Mrs. Alison " rankled as bitterly as Johnson's " poor Lyttelton " had a few years back. But when Mr. Alison's wife's guardian's sister's husband's murder is dragged in to attest the violence of ladies' love passions, one feels that the squabble has almost reached the ludicrous stage. This is to her sister, and must be of about this date :

I am afraid that great part of Dr. Gregorys story is a farce, I have too much reason to believe all the parties knew Mr. Pulteney had not any living to give before they set out for Sudborough, and that all that was advanced on the subject of the living, was a lye to draw me in to give countenance to a disgraceful proceeding. I abhor the doctrine of Jean Jaques, that a Person should not receive any pecuniary mark of affection from a Friend ; whoever is of that opinion has a base and vile preference of money to every kind of sentiment ; but to be the Pensioner of one with whom one has neither friendship nor relation is surely degrading oneself. I do not believe that Mr. Pulteney to please Mr. Nairne his factotum did promise to give £150 a year till he got a living for Mr. Alison. Mr. Nairne is a Lawyer, and I believe a man of good character, and Mrs. Alison says he was one of her guardians, and on her account he applyd to Mr. Pulteney for a Living. Mr. Nairnes Sister wd have been hanged or burnt for the murder of her Husband if she had not escaped from Prison, and as she was guilty of this crime in order to marry her Gallant, Mr. Nairne may have a great opinion of the violence of Ladies love passions.

The whole proceeding of poor Mrs. Alison has much afflicted me, being so unworthy of her former conduct, but I beg you not to mention what I have said, as I shall keep distance and silence, but the attempt to draw me in to give my consent to the marriage on a false pretence of Alisons having a Living was abominable in the Gregorys, and very sly in Mr. Pulteney. I am sorry for poor Ld Rodney. Mrs. Thrale is fallen below pity. I think the Women and Girls are run mad, Heaven be praised I have no Daughters.

Better knowledge of the facts has brought the conviction that the Piozzi marriage was very far from being either the heinous blunder or the appalling fiasco which contemporary comment almost unanimously considered it. Mrs. Montagu's view, which one could hardly expect to be approving, will be found in her answer to her sister's letter in the pages devoted to the Thrales, later on (pp. 273-5).

The Primate reached Sandleford in July, and as James Wyatt, the famous architect, who was at the time employed on the Christchurch, Oxford Quadrangle, for the Primate, as well as in completing the alterations to Sandleford Priory, spent a couple of days there during his stay, "we had very interesting subjects of conversation," including the motto for the new approach gate, which it was decided should be: "The fairest way about is the nearest way home." "Do not," she adds, "attribute to me the ingenious correction of *furthest* to *fairest*; it was made long ago by one of those genius's who come into the world for the notable purpose of correcting a word."

This August young Montagu was bitten by a dog, and though the dog's illness was declared not to be hydrophobia but merely a distemper, he was promptly dispatched for sea-bathing, which was then believed to be the cure for that dire malady.

Continuing her gazette, Mrs. Scott writes to her sister:

Lady Harcourt has kissed hands on her appointment, and I am told made a most graceful appearance, such as shoud ornament a Court ; perhaps her Graces were not less conspicuous for her being accompanied by Lady Weymouth. Mrs. Thrale is at length married to Piozzi. Instead of living at Bath I wou'd have her take a House adjacent to Lady Mary Duncan, they might spend their hours in alternate praises of their Caros, in soft Italics, the Sposo indeed can only be added by the former, but the panegyric may not be the less tender for the omission. However I understand that it cannot be said of Piozzi that he is Vox et preterea nihil. Sr John Burgoyne has been put under arrest by Lord Macartney, and I hear is coming home in that degraded state ; but I have not learnt the nature of his offence. Lady Frances is in dolefuls upon it ; but as she has no great affection for him, she will I suppose find consolation in reflecting that her favorite Son is now possessed of above an hundred thousand pounds by marrying a very pretty sweet temperd Wife, the fondest of Turtles ; Ly Frances told me lately that such was the profits of his marriage since the death of Mrs. Burgoynes only Brother, besides Jewels, plate, and sundry valuables. When fortune has been so lavish to one branch of a family, it can not be expected she shoud bestow many of her smiles on the rest.

To her Sister

One can see no sufficient temptation to induce Lord John Cavendish to give up the liberty he has so long enjoyed, as must endear it to him, or Lady Spencer to relinquish hers which is so lately obtain'd, that the charm of novelty cannot yet be worn off, and it has many that are more permanent. Should they really marry I do not believe they will long think they have acted wisely ; it can afford them no additional convenience, nor give them any delight ; tho' probably they will live amicably together. One woud not put on fetters without some good cause, liberty is so very agreable.

Mrs. Montagu's surmise was right, and Lord John enjoyed his agreeable liberty to the end of his life in 1796, Lady Spencer (eldest daughter of Stephen Poyntz and mother of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire) surviving him by eighteen years.

General Sir John Burgoyne (great-nephew of the Saratoga commander) was eldest son of Lady Frances

Montagu. His brother Montagu married the daughter and heiress of Eliab Harvey of Claybury Hall.

From her Sister

June 25.

I intend going to Kensington next thursday for a few days. The poor Dss of B: is at present under great affliction from the apprehension of an approaching loss, not of a Child or friend, but alas ! of a tooth ; a tooth in front ; dire calamity ! and so unforeseen and unexpected too at the early age of 65. She is wonderfully distressed ; but as she is a religious Woman she calls up all her piety to her aid, and endeavours to submit to her hard trial with christian patience, and philosophic fortitude, and tho hitherto her endeavours have not been crown'd with much success, yet perseverance in her exertions, with the assistance of Spence, a person in this case more consolatory than all the Divines of the Church of England or all the Priests of the catholic Communion, I trust will enable her to come off conqueror. She ask'd me some questions about a Dentist, but lookd as bashful and mortified as a reputed Virgin wou'd do on consulting an accoucheur on a miscarriage or pregnancy. I recommended Spence, and no doubt the grand event is over, as the poor tooth waggled in a most tell tale manner, therefore required speedy expulsion.

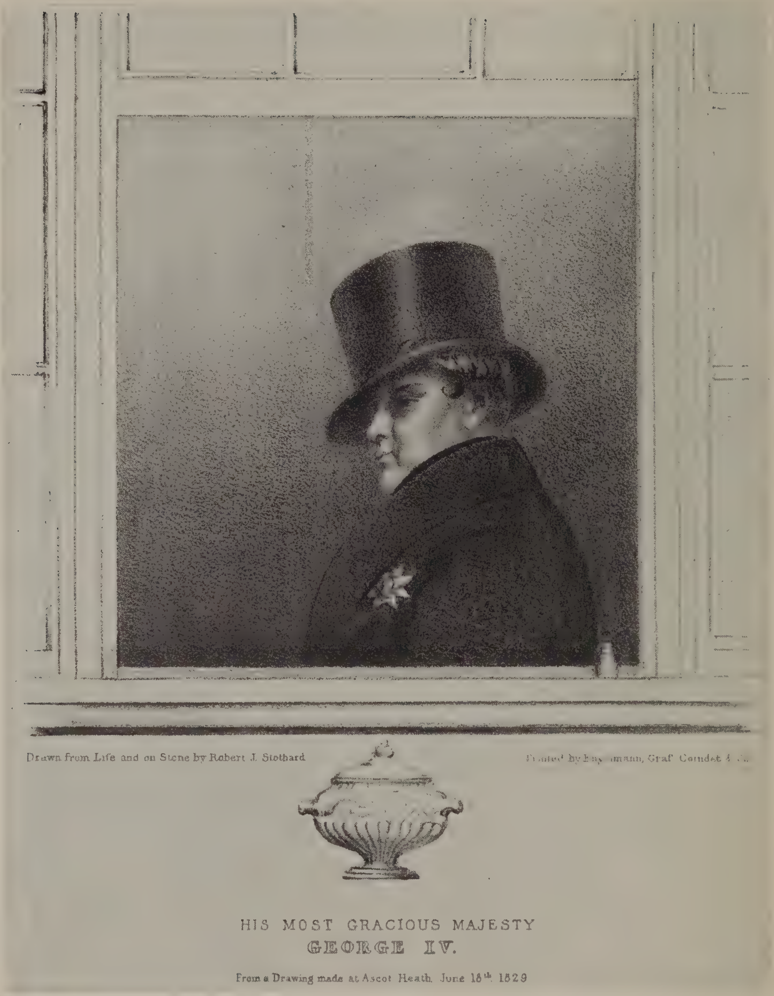
A later letter adds :

General Smith has been discharging most of his Servants, and probably is by this time set off for the Continent. It is said that Bowes and Lady Strathmore are really in extreme indigence. The old adage says Riches make themselves wings and fly away, but in these days the Possessors do not wait the slow progress of that natural operation, but make the Wings themselves in such profusion that they out-fly Mercury himself, tho armd with them Cap à pied. . . . You perceive the tax on Coals is given up. I believe lamps are used instead of Candles in many Manufactures, and might be in most ; as for the poor who are not Manufacturers the quantity of Candles they use is so very small, that even in their poverty they cannot feel the new tax. The Industrious are too much tired by the end of the day to do anything by Candle light ; and the idle will not. In Sumer they go to bed before they need them, and in Winter the fire gives light enough for most of their wants. Mr. Pitts conduct in regard to the loan has gain'd him great honour.

I imagine the Miss Williams who accompanied the Dss of Beaufort is natural Daughter to Mrs. Cornelly. I cannot say that I remember the name she goes by, but I know that such a person passd a good deal of time last year with the Duchess at Badminton, and that she is said to sing most charmingly, and plays finely on some particular Instrument, I think the Harp. I have heard she is very accomplishd. She lived with Lady Cowper some years before she died, and she recommended her to the protection of the Marchioness of Tweedale. I forget whether by Lady Cowpers bequest, or by what means, she is possessed of an hundred pounds per year. Mrs. Cornelly call'd her a young Lady committed to her care. I am sorry her Grace of Beaufort has been ill, when she left London she had no complaint but that of a departed tooth, which oppressd her very much, especially as she was under an anxious uncertainty of mind whether to have its place supplied, to which she had some objections. Pray has the poor tooth got a successor or not?

Reference has already been made to the story of Miss Bowes, who after the death of her first husband, Lord Strathmore, fell a victim to "an Irish heiress hunter," Andrew Stoney, who took the name of Bowes and achieved something like a record in matrimonial blackguardism, his lady suffering accordingly. Mrs. Cornelys, the famous proprietress of Carlisle House, Soho Square, whose concerts and society nights had been so fashionable in the 'sixties, had been ousted by Almack's and the Pantheon, and the enterprising cateress was reduced to providing asses' milk and occasional breakfasts in rural Knightsbridge. Readers of William Hickey's and other journals of the day will recall many references to her assemblies, masquerades, and harmonic meetings. But "the cold hands of merciless creditors" were laid chillingly upon "the high priestess of fashion" in her later days, and in the kindly shelter of the Fleet she died.

History has dealt faithfully with the earlier career


Drawn from Life and on Stone by Robert J. Stothard
Printed by Engelmann, Graf, Coindet & Co.
HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
GEORGE IV.
From a Drawing made at Ascot Heath, June 18th 1829

HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY GEORGE IV
Drawn from life by Robert Stothard

of the First Gentleman of Europe, and from Mrs. Montagu's remark that at Lady Lucan's assembly "to his Royal Highness honour he did not make any sort of fracas," we gather the estimation in which he was held. At Carlton House and at his Pavilion at Brighton, the Louis Weltjie, mentioned in the next letter, was a sort of Major Domo and Clerk of the Kitchens. The little German was excessively ugly, and managed to find a spouse of equally potent charms; with whom, after quarrelling with his Princely patron, he settled later on at Hammersmith, where a street commemorates his name.

"Tho," says Wraxall, "he had resided some years in England, he spoke no language except a barbarous Anglo-Westphalian jargon, which generally provoked laughter. But amidst his attention to the tastes of his royal highness, Weltjee had not been oblivious of his own personal interests."

To her Sister

The P of W has been at Sr Henry Featherstones, he staid three days, during which they had Races of all sorts,—fine horses—Poneys—Cart-horses—Women—and Men in Sacks, with various other Divertimenti fit for Children of six foot high. I hear he was much delighted, and said that Newmarket Races were dull in comparison. They were within three or four miles of us, but no one except Servants went from hence, nor do I find that any Ladies of fashion in the Town were at them. Poor Lady Featherstone, Sr Harrys Mother, fled from the riot to Mr. Fremongers. These pretty Sports attracted a great Mob, who were charm'd with a P. so familiarly affable to them all. At Brighthemstone he did not give quite so much satisfaction; to see him come drunk to the Balls, walk arm in arm with Weltjie, and sit in the Gallery at the Play with a Woman of the Town gave no great delight to the Spectators. It is however allowd that when he is so drunk he can scarcely stand he dances better, bating a fall now and then, than any other Man, even when sober. . . . The eldest Miss Thrale is gone or going to a Mr. Cator's, one of her Guardians. the 2d and 3d I am told are to be at Mrs. Murrays, but of this I am not certain as I have not had it from herself, one of the Cator family gave me the information. The youngest remains at the School where her Mother placed her. Dr. Johnson says he did not think there had been so abandoned a Woman in the World.

John Cator, M.P. for Ipswich, was, with Dr. Johnson, one of Thrale's executors. It had been proposed to make the Misses Thrale wards in Chancery.

Referring to Mrs. Vesey's second visit to Margate this summer, Mrs. Montagu says that she had become such a spiritual being as to subsist on conversation, and where that is not to be found, " no matter how fine the turbot or how excellent the soles she will pine away. Last year she came away a perfect skeleton, and said the air was too sharp, but I believe the manners and conversation were too blunt for her."

Amongst Sandleford visitors this August were Dr. Beattie—greatly aged by his wife's distressing illness—and his too studious son; Mrs. Garrick and Miss More; whilst for reading, the hostess was being greatly entertained by William Coxe's travels, on which and his anecdotes of dungeons, daggers, and poisoned draughts she wrote at length to Mrs. Carter. She was very apprehensive about certain items of Mr. Pitt's new taxes; smuggling (of silk petticoats ?) would be very difficult to prevent, whilst " the rendering of the pernicious habit of drinking tea more common amongst the lower order of people is a great mischief, as it spends their money and loses their time, and does not afford any nourishment." It will be remembered that she was herself quite capable, on occasion, of securing a few pounds of smuggled tea.

Whilst Beattie was at Sandleford this autumn he had mentioned the poverty of a very old friend of his, Mrs. Arbuthnot, a widow who contrived to live decently on £10 per annum. His hostess promptly arranged to settle upon the old lady a small annuity, and was

> pleased to find, by her husband, she is so nearly allied to my first favourite of all the Beaux Esprits, Dr. Arbuthnot. He had none of the peevish jealousies of Mr. Pope, nor the harshness and pride of Dr. Swift ; conscious of more noble endowment, he was not anxious to obtain the character of a wit. There is such ease and so natural an air in his writings, as proves him to have been witty without effort or contrivance. I have heard my old friend Lord Bath speak of him with great affection as a most worthy amiable man, and as a companion more pleasant and entertaining than either Pope or Swift.

Margaret Forbes, his great-great-niece, gives a full account of Mrs. Arbuthnot in *Beattie and his Friends*, from which the above lines are extracted. Beattie gives a charming description in his letter to Mrs. Montagu of the old lady's reception of the annuity proposal : " She attempted an exclamation, but it was inarticulate ; the tears ran down her furrowed cheeks, and she could only say, ' Oh dear, I cannot speak one word! ' . . . She held up her eyes and hands, sometimes in silent adoration of providence, sometimes with expressions of deep gratitude to her benefactress."

It is curious, indeed, that when Mr. Vesey had had a second relapse in the previous December Mrs. Montagu had very precisely foretold what was actually to happen six months later, as the following extract will show :

> This very instant I have a message from Lady Primrose that Mr. Vesey has had another relapse and waits the return of the Yacht ; he is at present better, but I have some fears about him, so many relapses are alarming. If he shd dye, our Sylph will not only grieve as she should do for her espoused Mr. Vesey, but according to the most approved method of woefull Widows, she will drink his ashes, or weep all day over his heart in a crystal case, or sit mourning on his monument. She will do all that any illustrious Widow has done except the Ephesian Matron, who tho celebrated is not a Widow du

bon ton. What a task will Mrs. Hancock have in the occasion? who never knew the value of a husband, nor has studied the duty of Widows, but in a Dunstable way of computation, will reckon the grief of the deprivation to be merely adequate to the felicity of the possession, and this unsentimental creature will give part of our friends sorrow to the Dairy maid he woed, to the actresses he won, to the kept mistresses he maintain'd, till in short there will be only an ordinary portion of sorrow left to our Sylph. After all I have said, I shall realy be sorry for Mr. Vesey as an amiable man in Society, and on the whole, I believe, a comfort to Mrs. Vesey, who loves the companion and esteems the friend, and forgives the infidelities of the Husband.

Brief notice must suffice here concerning Lactilla, *alias* the Poetical Milkwoman, Mrs. Yearsley of Bristol, though the correspondence between Hannah More and Mrs. Montagu concerning her is rather amusing. Miss More made her acquaintance in the summer of this year, and was so greatly impressed by her poetic "genius" that she collected funds towards her support, hired her "a *little* maid," provided her with books, and spent a whole year in arranging for the publication by subscription of a volume of her verse. Mrs. Montagu, of course, was asked to help and head the list; she contributed twenty-two guineas in all, but it is evident that she was, throughout, a little cautious and uneasy about Hannah's wonderful find.

Miss More, having provided the Lactilla with Ossian, Dryden's Tales, and "the most decent of the metamorphoses," wrote "above a thousand pages on her subject." The subscription, run by two such popular and energetic ladies, went merrily, and over £500 was collected, and the volume printed; and, as she had a ne'er-do-weel husband, the proceeds of the collection, after paying for the printing and giving the poetess a small sum for clothing and furniture, were invested for her use and benefit in the five per cents and in the joint names of the two ladies. Which having been faithfully accomplished, the ungrateful Lactilla turned upon poor Hannah in a fury, demanded the whole of the money, accused her of fraud, and—unkindest touch of all—told her that she had ruined her verses by her corrections and her reputation by her Preface. Meanwhile, having decked herself in "very fine Gauze bonnets, long lappets, gold pins, etc.," she declared her intention of putting Miss More in the papers and petitioning the king against her; said that she had spoilt her poems through jealousy, and that she would reprint them herself in their original beauty.

Mrs. Montagu was full of sympathy for her outraged co-trustee, and never even whispered, "I told you so"; but her risible faculties were deeply stirred, and particularly by the fact that Lord Bristol had not only given the milkwoman £50, but was godfather to her child; which, had it lived, "with his Lordship's instructions and the disposition it might inherit from its mother, it possibly might have risen to some great station—in botany bay."

Things being as they were, Mrs. Montagu strongly advised Miss More to get rid of all further responsibility as soon as possible. A friend of Mrs. Yearsley's agreed to take over the trust; the invested fund was duly transferred and all accounts closed. "What a holiday for me," exclaims indignant and exhausted Hannah, "when I have done with her and her business which has occupied near a whole year of my Life!"

1785

MARRIAGE OF MATTHEW MONTAGU—MRS. DELANY, GENERAL OGLETHORPE, WARREN HASTINGS

Letter from Mrs. Alison. Deaths of friends. Matthew Montagu's engagement. Settlements. St. Anthony's Fire. Edward Jerningham. Montagu's wedding. The drive to Sandleford. Death of Mr. Vesey. His will. Reconciliation with Mrs. Alison. Death of Dowager Duchess of Portland. Her character. Mrs. Delany unprovided for. The King's bounty. Death of General Oglethorpe. Warren Hastings. Mr. Hartley. Lord George Gordon and the Archbishop. His later years. The Diamond Necklace. Mrs. Montagu at sixty-five. Death of Sir William Robinson.

" Poor Mrs. Alison " was still, it appears, in disgrace in 1785, when Montagu's engagement to Miss Charlton was announced; but the young lady who had so egregiously failed to be his fiancée could not withhold her felicitations:

From Mrs. Alison

Edin: *May 30th.*

As you declined answering my former letter, I need make no apology for not having written to you of late, for I am not even entitled to the liberty I now take of once more addressing you; but in the pleasure it gives me to hear that your Nephew has made choice of a Young Lady in every respect so much to your mind, I wish to forget the pain it is natural to suppose I must have felt at your silence, as it seem'd to indicate my being separated from your regard—permit me therefore to offer my sincerest Congratulations on this Joyful occasion, and to assure you that whatever unpleasant scenes have pass'd between us, I shall ever pray for your happiness, and rejoice at every event that contributes to it. I hope Miss Charlton will ever continue to deserve the approbation you have given her, and that this marriage will prove a continual source of comfort and satisfaction to you ; and from my experience of the state into which Mr. Montagu is going to enter, I have no doubt of the happiness that awaits him, nor can my friendship form a kinder wish, than that he may find his ideas of it as fully realized as I have done.

Were it not for authentic examples to the contrary, it would seem barely credible that a woman of character and intellect could be moved, after many years of intimacy, affection, and esteem, at a stroke to suspicion, anger, and dislike, over a very honourable if injudicious engagement, the main obstacle to which it was in her own hands to remove; and one cannot resist the feeling that Mrs. Montagu was intensely piqued that "her beloved Greg" should deliberately have chosen poverty with Alison and rejected her Matthew with a fortune.

As the years went on, death began to take increasing toll of Mrs. Montagu's associates; and 1785 saw the demise of her girlhood's greatest friend, the Dowager Duchess of Portland; of her cousin, Sir William Robinson; and of the husband of her dearest and most devoted ally and correspondent, Mrs. Vesey. With these events, and with the marriage of her nephew and heir to Miss Elizabeth Charlton, an orphan and a ward of Chancery of Kentish family who lived with her grandmother, and was, "though rather little, of a very pleasing countenance, finely made and remarkably genteel," and who added to her other attractions a fortune of nearly £50,000, the letters of this year are chiefly occupied. Mrs. Montagu contributed "pretty large settlements in land both present and future," and though "my proposals were immediately and perfectly approved both by the Lord Chancellor and Master in Chancery, the mercenary spirit of the lawyers employed to draw them extended the voluminous settlements over as many acres of parchment as, converted into green land would make a pretty little farm, and for which, I suppose, they will charge as much as would purchase a tolerably good one."

Of her clerical brother she writes to her sister, February 2:

> William is just now reconciled to the World. Ld Cardigan has promised us a Living for him, and his Lordp said he hoped speedily. You must know he is to preach a fast sermon (I dont mean Ld Cardigan, as grammer wd infer) and I have been toiling for him all this morning. I don't believe I deserve a good beaver, but I am as tired as possible with the newness of the occupation, and I am engaged to Lady Sophia Egerton to night; I shall certainly talk of Nineveh and of Tyre and Sidon and Sodom and Gomorrah and all the unhappy cities of old whom Wickedness overthrew.

In March Mrs. Montagu had an attack of erysipelas which her brother enquired after under the name of St. Anthony's Fire, as it was curable by his intercession, which in this instance, if invoked, appears to have been rapidly efficacious. In May, having given her jewels to Miss Charlton with orders for their resetting, Mrs. Montagu went off to Sandleford to await the lawyers' completion of the marriage settlements, to which the wedding was immediately to succeed.

I have not come across any references in these letters to Mrs. Montagu's falling on the stairs at a Drawing Room, concerning which Miss Port quotes some lines of Mr. Jerningham's to the Hebes of the day, ending:

> Let caution be your guide whene'er you sport
> Within the splendid precincts of the Court;
> The event of yesterday for prudence calls
> *'Tis dangerous treading where Minerva falls*!

His letters, however, are quite in the approved style of the day.

> Madam [he writes in reference to the subscription for the Cobbler Poet's volume of verse]—As Apollo (to pay a very great compliment to the Muses) has appointed you their purse-bearer, will you allow me to show at least my good wishes to Mr. Woodhouse by throwing in my mite. Since you are enter'd upon this generous office I now perfectly understand a Line I have somewhere met with, *That the Muses are fed by the Graces.*—I have the honor to be with great respect, Madam, Yr most obedient humble Servant, Edw. Jerningham.

Town was very gay, and Montagu danced till seven in the morning at the Duchess of Bolton's. By the beginning of July the lawyers had finished their "matrimonial negotiations," and his aunt came up to town for the wedding, which took place at Marybonne Church on July 9, in the presence of his mother, his uncle the Recorder, Mr. Raikes who gave the bride away, and one or two other members of the family; Matthew's old tutor, Mr. John Burrows, performing the ceremony.

It may possibly have been imagined by the brides and bridegrooms of to-day (if any should read these Memoirs), that the wedding would have been made the occasion of a great breakfast and reception at Montagu House, and that the happy aunt would make a particularly brave show to celebrate the occasion; but it had been decided that the young couple should go to Sandleford for their honeymoon, which necessitated their departure direct from the church, in a post-chaise and four with two postillions, their aunt following in a similar equipage. They pulled up at Salt Hill for lunch, where George Selwyn chanced to be looking out of a window and came down stairs to hand Mrs. Montagu out of her carriage, but not knowing about the wedding—if it had been an execution he would certainly have been there—had no *bon mot* in readiness. Mr. Marsh the old landlord, being informed that Montagu was now a bridegroom, hobbled down on his crutches to see him, "for he told White it was but a little while ago that Mr. Montagu had brought him to Maidenhead Bridge a little boy, and at night, when he was running about in his shirt, said he would make a good Bacchus to put on his sign."

Readers of William Hickey's *Memoirs* may recall that it was to March's, the Windmill at Salt Hill, that that bright spark, and "twelve or fifteen of us, attended by some of the most fashionable women of the time" used to go down from town from Friday to Tuesday, "where we spent three or four days together in all sorts of frolic and fancy"; thus inaugurating the popular "Week end."

At Reading, where they halted for tea, Lord Lansdowne (as Lord Shelburne had now become) arrived at the Inn immediately after them, on his way to Bowood, and came upstairs to make his compliments to the blushing pair. Thence they drove on to Sandleford, avoiding Newbury, where the bells were jangling on the happy occasion, but where a town demonstration was not to the taste of the bashful couple, who were glad to get off their dusty hats at Sandleford and sit down to soup and boiled chickens and general congratulations. "I never felt such delightful moments as while we were thus joining our prayers and embraces."

Mr. Vesey, who had had two or three apoplectic seizures during the last year, died in this June. He had had an income of £4000, but left hardly anything except their house in Clarges Street to his wife; whilst "his Trollop" received a legacy of £1000. The will naturally caused the greatest indignation amongst Mrs. Vesey's many friends of the Blue Stocking coterie, but she herself had been "imbibing the principles of Jean Jacques Rousseau," and was merely inconsolable, to the intense annoyance of Mrs. Montagu, who had no patience with the defunct "monster," to whom she had paid so many paper compliments.

Mat's wedding and the great happiness of her young pair at last softened their aunt's heart towards Dorothea Alison. More than one of her correspondents had gently urged reconciliation, and Lady Harcourt pleaded eloquently to the tune that it was her judgement rather than her heart that was displeased, that Cupid was more powerful than Minerva, and much more to like effect. Horace Walpole was a warm supporter of Mrs. Alison's cause, declaring the whole story redounded to her honour, and that in his opinion the conduct of her patroness was "preposterous at least." His great esteem for Dr. Gregory's charming daughter was doubtless heightened by his abounding lack of respect for "Mrs. Montagu of Shakespeare-shire," whom he loved to call Ashtaroth and Aspasia, and concerning whose assemblies he made obscure "coptic" jokes which had to be explained in subsequent letters.

Minerva at length, now that her precious nephew was safely folded, wrote in most conciliating terms, though Dorothea had absolutely declined suggestions to send soft messages through friends which might be shown to Mrs. Montagu; and it is evident that her letter was accompanied by a substantial token of regard, which was doubtless most acceptable to the charming little bride who was shortly to become a mother.

July brought another death in her circle of friends and another deplorably inadequate will. The Duchess of Portland's decease was followed by anxious speculations from many friends of Mrs. Delany as to what provision had been made for that constant companion of her later years. The following extracts show that estimates of their respective characters and abilities varied considerably.

Mrs. Montagu writes:

The Duchess of Portland lived for Mrs. Delany, one may almost say, all her pursuits were directed to whatever Mrs.

Delany pointed, and her Grace condemn'd or approved, sought or avoided, loved or hated, according to her Friends suggestion, which was the more endearing as certainly the Duchess had considerable superiority of parts over Mrs. Delany. . . . I hear Mrs. Delany bears the loss of the Duchess of Portland with patient resignation. I suppose at 85 she thinks she will not stay long behind her. Her Graces attachment to Mrs. Delany was the most perfect imaginable, and her Grace was not covetous, so I imagine she imparted as much of her wealth as her friends delicacy w^{d} accept. I do not doubt but her Grace has largely provided for her now, but I have not heard from any one what disposition of her Fortune she has made.

Mrs. Scott writes to her sister on July 23:

I see by the papers that the Dowager Duchess of Portland is no more ; pray has she done any thing for Mrs. Delany that may add ease and a little more latitude to the days which cannot now be many, for her sand must be nearly run out, and I think she must feel a good deal on the loss of her old friend, who has been most constant to her, tho' perhaps not truly generous. The Duke will scarcely be inconsolable, it is a sort of Gaol delivery to him. I hear the Devonshire Estate is put to nurse, and that family reduced to the small pittance of 8,000*l*. a year, it will really be poverty to them who cou'd not keep within their original immense income, and some of the hungry opposition must feel it very sensibly. They have one comfort, they can scarcely have run out so violently but that so great an income must soon clear it ; the yearly savings will rise to a pretty sum, and form a quick accumulation.

To Mrs. Carter

I wishd very much that during the hot weather our dear Vesey would have avail'd herself of Sr Joshua Reynolds kind offer to go to his House on Richmond Hill ; the freshness of its air, the gayety of its prospects, the view of objects continually in motion on land or water, have a happy effect on the animal spirits. At Richmond our dear Sylph wd be in the Neighbourhood of Mr. Walpole, Mrs. Walsingham, Mrs. Garrick, and the Cambridges. I am rejoyced that Mr. Veseys vile neglect of her will not cause that distress to which it was at first apprehended it might expose her. Tho not opulence, it is competency ; and if she cd forget Mr. Vesey, she would be happier than she has been since we knew her. It is very kind in Mr. Dickenson to stay in Town till poor Mrs. Delany had her Nephew to comfort her. I dare say the Duchess of Portland has amply provided every comfort for her which money can purchase.

. . . I have been grieved and provoked at the manner in which the news papers have spoke of the death of a Person who during her life made many happy. They prattle about the selling her Museum, and her Fortune being usefull to her sons Creditors. What disgrace will these vile news papers throw on the best characters of this age in the opinion of those in the next, who shall read them from curiosity after the manners of their Ancestors.

The vile newspapers, however, were not entirely mistaken:

Sep. 9th.

Mrs. Poyntz, who has been in London, and at public places of resort lately, assures me that the Dss of Portland left a Will in which Mrs. Delany is not mentioned, and that her Grace left to Lady Weymouth, Lady Stamford, and Ld Ed Bentinck, £5000 a piece ; this appears to me incredible, for Mrs. Delany being 85, surely a very small degree of affection might have made her Grace charge the 15000 with an annuity for her Life ; I hear the Duke of Portland told Mrs. Delany he shd always be happy to see her at Bulstrode, and shd consider her as his Mother. The Kings bounty has made up the pecuniary loss by the Dss's inattention, but nothing I shd think cd heal the wound such unkindness must give, indeed it is not only unkind, but injurious to leave a Friend destitute of such comforts as they had been accustomed to receive, and I cannot but hope some Codicil will be found. I understand this Will was made some years ago. I was very sorry to part with my old Love the General, and heartily pity Mrs. Oglethorpe. After having loved each other for near a Century, sad must be the separation.

Readers of Walpole's and Fanny Burney's letters will remember how nobly the King came to the rescue of Mrs. Delany, for whom he provided not only a house at Windsor and an annuity of £300, but complete equipment of plate, china, linen, wine, sweetmeats, even pickles.

General Oglethorpe's splendid defence of Frederica and Georgia in 1747 will ever be remembered for its combination of pluck and bluff, magnificent handling of a handful of natives and cunning strategy in contriving to suggest the arrival of an English fleet at the critical moment. Whitefield said the delivery of Georgia from the Spaniards could not be paralleled but by some instances out of the Old Testament. This fine old soldier, whose personal dignity was combined with a wonderfully boyish vivacity—we have already seen him and young Montagu going arm-in-arm to Westminster at the time of the Gordon Riots—and great diversity of interests, had died at Cranham on the 1st of July, probably at the age of eighty-nine, though many believed him much older. The only letter from him which I have come upon is endorsed on the back by Mrs. Montagu: "written by Gen' Oglethorpe 1782; he was then accounted about one hundred years of age." It is written in a very clear firm hand:

> MADAM—The Tyrant Queen Fashion has established in this Town what you justly call, The Horred custom of Mortgaging Time as well as, the less valuable property of Estates, called Goods Chatles etc.
>
> This Lively Skiping Queen Fashion, has put her livery servants into Dr. Munroes Strait Waiscoates, and glued up their bodys, and minds, into such whimsical formes, as deprives them of the free use of both.
>
> Your superior Genius hath broke through the magick Charm, and given a promissery note, but how shall I know at what Hour, and on what Day, you give audience to your Devoted Attendants, That I may not omitt paying my Court, and call for acceptance of the note, After the custom of Merchants.—With the greatest Respect I am, Madam, Your most obedient Humble Servant, JAS. OGLETHORPE.

Warren Hastings had now returned from India, and seems to have made a most favourable impression, on the ladies at any rate. Fanny Burney had been "extremely pleased with the extraordinary plainness and simplicity of his manners." Hannah More found him "a man of remarkable simplicity of manners, dress and deportment, full of admirable good sense; nothing of the nabob about him"; and Mrs. Montagu had formed the same estimate expressed almost in the same words:

> *To her Sister*
>
> The great Hastings is to drink tea with me this evening. I am charm'd with the humility and simplicity of his behaviour and manners. He has none of the airs of a Nabob, nor the pride of a Hero.
>
> Have your Norwich booksellers got a Work entitled The Bhagvat Gieta, a work translated by Charles Wilkins from the Sanskrit, and published with an admirable preface by Mr. Hastings, it is a very curious composition, written above 4,000 years ago.

Later she writes:

> His Grace [of Armagh] promises to dine with me tomorrow, and if Mr. Hastings had not left Town, I intended to have ask'd him to have been of the party, he is worthy to converse with the Primate from the greatness of his mind and simplicity of manners. He w^{d} be agreable to his Grace from his Eastern learning, and the extensive and great employments on which he has been engaged. His letter to Mr. Smith on Mr. Wilkins translation of the work I mention'd to you, is written with classical elegance; the title of the work is the Bhagvat-Geeta or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon in eight lectures with notes, translated from the original in the Sanskrit or ancient language of the Brahmans, sold at Nourses.
>
> Lord Cornwallis's only and darling daughter took a trip to Gretna Green the other day with a young Irish officer, 2nd son to Mr. Singleton, an Irish Gentleman, to the great grief of her poor father. Mr. Jerningham who dined with me yesterday enquired much after you, as did also Mrs. Chapone.

A letter to Mrs. Carter of November 19 contains one or two interesting references. After narrating the family woes of Mrs. Hartley, who had been to spend a few days with her, she adds, "I have now a prospect of getting Mr. Hartley into a situation which will afford them a decent subsistence." This was presumably David Hartley the younger, whose father the philosopher, Mrs. Montagu had known in the 'fifties, and who was himself with Franklin one of the signatories of the American treaty of 1783. Hartley had built himself a house on Putney Heath to prove the value of his invention to secure buildings against fire by placing thin iron plates under the floors and ceilings, and this was doubtless the " box " to which Mrs. Montagu refers in one of her letters and from which she had temporarily rescued his wife. It will be remembered from a previous reference that she had used his iron plating in building her Portman Square House. His parliamentary speeches (though the *Gentleman's Magazine* was loud in their praise) were, according to Wraxall, so intolerably long and dull that his rising always operated like a dinner bell; whilst George Selwyn declared that no one could have a complete idea of a " boar " who had not been in Parliament and heard him speak for two hours. The letter goes on:

> I cannot give you any information concerning Lord G. Gordon's affair with the spiritual court. If he has called the Archbishop of Canterbury the W—— of Babylon it is very uncivil, as it is the only W—— his Lordship dislikes. I wish he would have taken a trip to Italy with the Bishop of Derby [?Derry].

Lord George Gordon's religious fervour had amazing vicissitudes after the midsummer madness of 1780. In 1784 he appeared as protestant champion of the Dutch against the Emperor Joseph, and cheerily informed Mr. Pitt that he had recruited a large number of sailors for service against His Catholic Majesty. After the Pope had tried in vain (or so his friends declared) to have him poisoned, he had a flirtation with the Quakers. Having been the companion of a dissenting parson during his last days, his evidence was required by an Ecclesiastical Court at Canterbury. Lord George declined to attend, or to see the Archbishop, and was accordingly and solemnly excommunicated at the church of St. Mary le bonne on May 4, 1786, remarking that "To expel me from a society to which I never belonged is an absurdity worthy of an Archbishop." It was doubtless in connection with this solemn episode that His Grace received the biblical but uncomplimentary epithet to which Mrs. Montagu alludes. Lord George's personal morals were indeed described by Horace Walpole as loose, and by Hannah More as very debauched, and engravings of him as "Lord Crop" with "The Meretricious Fair" were popular at the time. A year or two later, it will be remembered, he became a Jew, styled hinself "Israel Ben Abraham George Gordon," grew a mighty beard, and indited inspiring letters to fellow Hebrews from "The Felon Side, Newgate," to which he was finally relegated. Had he lived in our time, as Leslie Stephen remarks, it would have certainly been to an asylum rather than a prison that he would have been consigned.

At the end of this letter Mrs. Montagu writes:

"Mr. Jerningham tells me it is thought by many that the Cardinal is innocent of the theft, but perhaps guilty of too much intimacy with Madame la Motte, who sold the necklace," recalling the strange story of Cardinal de Rohan, the Countess of the piquant face, and Marie Antoinette's Diamond Necklace, which Carlyle has told in pages of undying beauty, though his historical accuracy has been impeached.

Walpole remarked that the Cardinal was very gallant but out of luck. "He might not have been sent to Newgate here for using the Queen's name to get diamonds"—Her Majesty having accepted some from Warren Hastings.

With the marriage of her nephew and heir the active life of Mrs. Montagu may perhaps be regarded as having passed its apogee, or to use a phrase more appropriate to her era, its grand climacteric. Of the death of her own little son "Punch" she did not write much at the time; but she confessed, long afterwards, to Mrs. Vesey that she had wept, night after night, in uncontrollable sorrow; had then very resolutely set herself to conquer the emotion, and had succeeded. One or two references to her boy, and to other little children in these letters, though very brief and restrained, convey a touch of poignant emotion nowhere else discernible. When it was clear that she was herself to be childless, the Montagus had adopted the second son of her favourite brother Morris, though she frankly detested the boy's mother; and his upbringing was very thoughtfully planned in view of the heritage to which he was thus destined. His aunt was quite awake to the perils of school life, and at Harrow, in Paris, and at Cambridge he was looked after by his own tutors. He was encouraged to acquaint himself with the working of the farm at Sandleford and the collieries at Denton; later on he was given horses and a valet, and was urged to travel, pay visits, and play his part in society. But Mrs. Montagu took no avoidable chances, and the young man was shepherded out of reach of the macaronies and the bloods. The product of all this watchful care seems to have been a fairly studious youth, and a good, though in no way remarkable, young gentleman who might easily have developed into much more of a prig than he seems to have been.

This is not to imply that "the old Prioress" tried to exercise any puritanical discipline, of the inefficacy of which she had had plentiful experience, even if her inclinations had leaned in that direction, which was far from being the case; and a letter of this autumn shows, for instance, that she had not forgotten nor repented the joys of her own dancing days:

> My young Friends love dancing and as it is a wholesome exercise I encourage it, so all the young visitants, the young

Couple, and the Men Servants out of Livery and several of my Maids dance in the Drawing room from the time we have drunk our tea till Supper, so I am obliged to have a tête à tête with the Mama all the evening. . . .

Apart from this establishment of her heir, she had now also achieved the substantial development and sound working of the Newcastle collieries and the Yorkshire farms; she had, with the help of Wyatt and Capability Brown, greatly enlarged the accommodation and beautified the surroundings of Sandleford Priory, and had also, with the assistance of the gifted but uncertain Stuart, completed her great house and garden at Portman Square. In regions social and literary she had—as Dr. Johnson himself liberally admitted—achieved a position of considerable eminence and influence, and had used it for the assistance of literary labour, the encouragement of rational converse, and the discouragement of high playing and deep drinking, at a time when both were, to an extent scarcely conceivable to-day, the daily and nightly vocation of a large proportion of polite and distinguished society. That she had vindicated Shakespeare and vanquished Voltaire she was constantly assured in the screeds of fulsome compliment that were the epistolary and conversational commonplace of the day; but it does not, on the whole, appear that she was the least inclined to accept these absurd encomia at anything like their face value.

Sir William Robinson, the Primate's brother and Mrs. Montagu's cousin, who had been ill at Bath through the summer, died there in September. He and she had kept up a steady correspondence all through the period of his illness, she sending him various invalid delicacies from Sandleford, and he keeping her very fully informed with the progress and vicissitudes of his ailment. His last letter to her is dated September 15, acknowledging her "constant supply of fresh partridges, and sending her in return "three cream cheeses, promising excellent this year." Sir William was, like all the brothers, a colossal man, and this must be taken into due consideration in judging of the meagre diet to which within four days of his death he was regretfully reduced: "Your partridges and a constant supply ready of the [meat] juice always at call, with mutton occasionally and new laid eggs, is now my whole subsistence." Sir William must have been a dear old boy, and his loss was a very severe one to the Primate, for whom his absolute devotion went the length of taking exactly the same size of shoes, the same diet, and the same physic.

1786

A QUIET YEAR—MR. BARWELL—MRS. FITZHERBERT—BALLOONS

Betty Tull's feather work. Newbury Sunday schools, and its Rector. The Poyntz family troubles. Nabob Barwell. Mrs. Jordan in Comedy. Mrs. Siddons at Sir Joshua's. Sir Charles Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavad-gîtâ*. Junius Junior. The Macartney duel. Mr. Fawkener's duel. Journey to Denton. The Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert. A feast at Denton. Lunardi's air balloon.

After the domestic excitements of the previous year, 1786 seems to have been a placid and uneventful one. There were the usual visits to Bath in the spring, to Sandleford in the summer, and to Denton later on. Matthew Montagu entered Parliament, and his wife's condition, to her aunt's great joy, became "interesting." The Montagus had settled in Manchester Square, where they were near neighbours of the aunt ; and Lady Grantham presented the niece at the Birthday, "splendid in jewels and elegantly apparelled ; her dress was rich but not gaudy or heavy, and she became it." Mr. Wyatt was still at work at Sandleford, which made life there somewhat airy and uncomfortable.

As Mrs. Tull's feathers would mount on the wings of the wind if she worked in her usual place, or any where in the body of the house [now partially roofless] the grand octagon drawing room must be dedicated to the feather manufactory, and as she has a delicate constitution I must put her up a bed there, for cold winds and damp plaister would not suit a valetudinarian.

I shall write to Mr. Raikes as soon as I can get the Corporation of Newbury to settle the plan of our Sunday Schools.

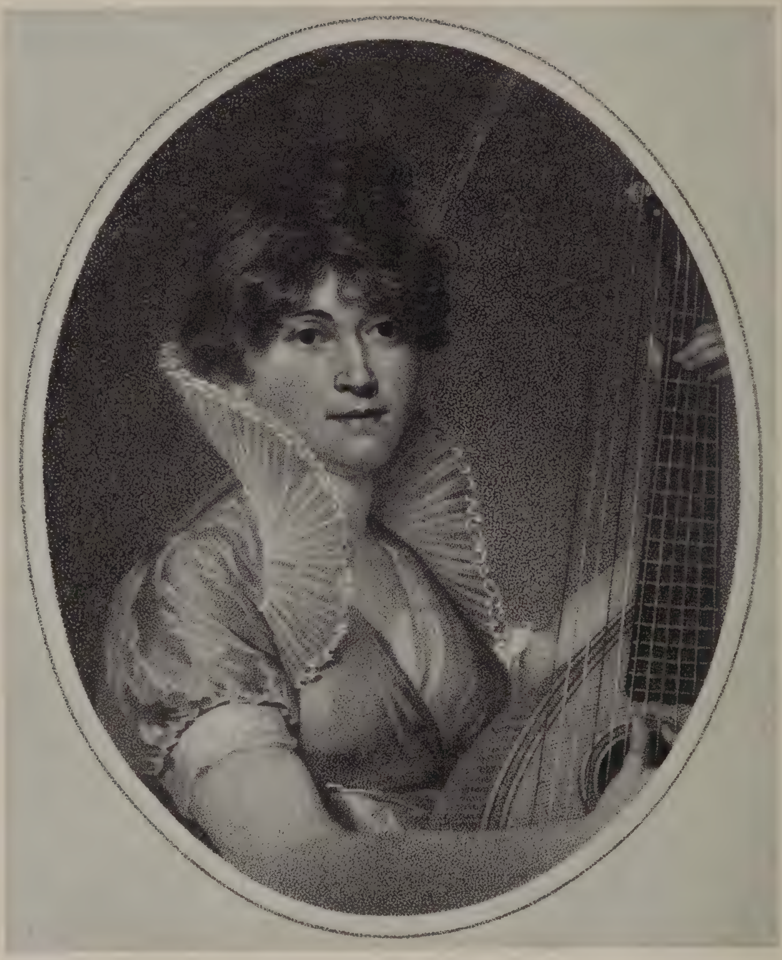
Betty Tull was the forewoman of the feather work which was being extensively executed for Montagu House on large canvas mounted frames ; and all friends were laid under contribution of material, from peacock tails to pheasant plumes and grey goose quills. Robert Raikes, the great promoter of Sunday schools, had been arranging with her for their erection at Newbury, where :

I do not expect any opposition from the Rector, for he never appears there, nor concerns himself with what is doing ; if indeed the children should read a chapter of the Bible to him I believe it would displease him very much. I hear that at his church at Hiclear [High Clere] he orders any Parson who officiates for him to read as fast as he can, and not to preach above 7 minutes.

Mrs. Poyntz's afflictions over the death of her sister Lady Corke and Mrs. Fawkener's " catastrophe " occupy much space in the Sandleford letters of this summer, but can hardly be found space for here.

We were all at Mr. Poyntz one evening last week, Lord Sandwich was just arrived, and I prevaild on his Lordship, and all the family at Midgeham, to dine with me the next day. Mrs. Poyntz was some days before carried to St. Albans by Lady Spencer in order to consult Dr. Warren, indeed I fear neither the art of medicine nor all the tender attentions of her Friends, will be able to preserve her long. She has a very delicate constitution and the death of Lady Corke affected her much, but the conduct of Mrs. Fawkener has I fear given her *le coup de Grace.* She will be a great loss to 3 lovely Daughters, and her youngest boy, who is the finest child I ever saw. Her eldest son a charming youth is less dependant on a Mothers care. Mr. Poyntz continues inconsolable.

William Augustus Fawkener was the eldest son of Sir Everard Fawkener, merchant, postmaster-general, friend of Voltaire, and supporter (as secretary to the



DOROTHY JORDAN
After John Russell

Duke of Cumberland) of the Chelsea China Manufactory. He had married in 1784 Georgiana Anne, daughter of William Poyntz of Midgham, and divorced her this year.

To her Sister

Jany the 4th.

Our dear young Friends calld on me yesterday morning to invite me to dine with them, and to go to the Play, for which they had just procured a box ; a matter of no small difficulty when Mrs. Jordan is to act ; as Heraclitus and Democritus had each their different Parties of Witts and Philosophes, so have Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Jordan amongst the fine Gentlemen, and fine Ladies ; all indeed are agreed that it is charming to laugh, or weep, but some greatly prefer the first, others the latter. As I think Comedy as well constituted to purge ones mind of scorn and contempt, as Tragedy of pity and terror, I was very desirous to see Mrs. Jordan in her facetious modes, and had told my young folks I wd be of their party, or they shd be of mine, when we cd get a box. I made 2 or 3 unsuccessful attempts during the mild weather, but I have now determined not to put my face out of doors till the frost is gone, least St. Anthony should seize it, so I excused myself as to the play, and prevailed on them to dine with me, and attend Mrs. Jordan in the afternoon. Ld Sandwich, and all who have much frequented the Theatre, speak of Mrs. Jordan as the best actress in parts of humour that ever was seen on any stage. The Romp and Country Girl are her characters, and I should be glad to see anywhere, in these days, a Miss Hoyden who has no boarding school airs or grimaces.

But an opportunity of meeting Mrs. Siddons at dinner proved irresistible :

Jan. 16th.

On Sunday I am to dine at Sr Joshua Reynolds where I am to meet Mrs. Siddons, whom I shall be glad to see in her own character. You will see by the account I have given of myself, that I am, like many Persons, superior to small, but not to great temptations, tho I resist an invitation to a common evening party I run the hazard of catching cold when a great character in the Drama of human life, or poetick fiction is exhibited.

An early letter of 1786, if it be correctly placed here, details a bit of scandal of which, on occasion, Mrs. Montagu was by no means incapable. Richard (known as " Nabob ") Barwell had been one of Warren Hastings' lieutenants on the Bengal Council, but had resigned when the latter made up his quarrel with Francis. Barwell's Indian record was largely one of bribery and intrigue, interspersed with other misdemeanours, which he does not appear to have left behind him when he returned to England with a huge fortune, and bought Stanstead from the Earl of Halifax for £102,500. Bonomi, Wyatt, and Lancelot Brown spent five years of work upon the house and park, where it would appear from the following extract that his pleasures were not purely sylvan. Dr. John Monro was the celebrated mad doctor and physician to Bethlehem Hospital, whose clutches poor old Alexander Cruden so narrowly escaped. Mrs. Barwell, who had been, as Miss Sanderson, the reigning beauty of Calcutta, died in 1778.

William Hickey tells an amusing story of the purse-proud Nabob's humiliation before a House of Commons Committee ; and says that when he went to dine with him at Ormond Street, though they were only six, a most sumptuous meal was served on plate by two men out of, and four in, livery, covers being laid for eighteen, which was Mr. Barwell's standing order, in case of friends turning up at short notice.

To her Sister

Feb. 2d.

I suppose you may before this time have had fuller information of Miss Barwells affair than I can give you, as I know few persons acquainted with the family, but I have, since I mentiond it to you, been told, the amourous pair were found in a dirty Inn at or near Dartford, where they had passd 3 days, and I presume nights together. The Gallant most basely charged the fair one with having from the first made the advances, and urged the elopement: his apologies rather aggravate than extenuate his guilt, for it is easier for a man to resist the solicitations of anothers passions than his own. I hear he is a great fool, and I am sure he must be a great scoundrel; he married a great fortune, or at least a Woman with a fortune superior to his own. I find poor Miss Barwell was suspected to have an amourous disposition, and the men now say, they are not surprized at what has happen'd. She had a little while before this exploit settled herself at a Mrs. Gordons, who takes young Ladies to board with her. Some say Mr. Barwell, when he brought her back, put her under the care of Dr. Monro, in which I think he did very wisely, for bleeding and a low diet wd do her good and a strait waistcoat cd do her no harm. I hear Mr. Barwells Wife is very pretty, but not so beautiful as the Nymph who lived in his Park, on whom he is said to have settled £3000 a year; which indeed he may well afford, if as the World says, he brought £800000 from India.

Mrs. Montagu has already attested that Lancelot Brown was a poet of culture, in the strictest sense of that term; yet we doubt if the Nymph of Stansfield Park was of his providing.

From a letter of the Primate's of about this period it would seem that an enterprising gentleman styling himself Junius Junior had got hold of some of Mrs. Montagu's letters, and was inclined either to print them or extort a price for their suppression:

The friendly communication of Junius Junior is attended with some awkward circumstances. You seem to be pretty much in the situation that Pope formerly was with his Dunces, but in your case, these men are attracted by a prospect of getting a sum of money, which they had not in view when they attacked Mr. Pope. Junius Junior is certainly acquainted with your discretion to suppress a Panegyrick, and expects a much more considerable reward for the suppression of Calumny and abuse. The worst that can happen, in my opinion is a publication of some of your original letters, for scandalous anecdotes, such as are alluded to by Junius Junior, will gain no credit, even in this life, which is disposed to level all characters. Pope's letters were published by Curl, from the originals that had been returned to him by the Executors of his Correspondents.

I always expected, and I suppose you are prepared in your own mind for an event of this kind ; copies of your letters are in the hands of many persons, and a Bookseller, as such, will print any thing that will sell.

There is no evidence that the good lady permitted herself to be thus victimised.

From Mrs. Matthew Montagu to her Aunt

June 13*th*.

It is currently reported, that his Majesty has interfered to prevent any future duel, between Lord Macartney and Genl. Stewart ; The Commands must be extended to some others, who intend to challenge him, upon grounds of personal resentment.

The duel between George Lord Macartney, late Governor of Fort St. George, Madras, and General Stewart, whom he had had arrested and sent home from India for mismanagement of the Cuddalore expedition, took place in Hyde Park on June 8, Stewart having addressed him in terms which led to a challenge.

Mr. Poyntz tells me, Mrs. Poyntz is a good deal better than when she went to Town, to be under Dr. Warrens care. I think Mr. Fawkener's having been drawn into a duel by Mr. T——s intrigue with his Wife should rather have encreased, than diminished the damages.

In another letter she adds :

I agree with you that Mr. F was not by the Law of honour obliged to fight the duel, and it is certainly contrary to wiser better and more merciful Laws, when a Man can keep his station in Society without it, for if he is esteemd a Coward he is no longer a Husband, a Father, a Brother, or Member of the Community, and then the crime lies at the door of the wretch who renderd the combat necessary.

Of the two combatants she writes :

I hope Ld Maccartney is recovering fast ; surely some means will be taken to prevent mischief from the blood thirsty

General. He will otherwise apply for a patent to murder all Governors of Madrass.

The journey to Denton took place in September, a visit being paid *en route* to the Dowager Lady Spencer at St. Albans, who took her to see Bacon's house at Gorhambury; and Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Montagu joined her in Northumberland a week after her arrival.

Denton always meant business rather than pleasure; the "naiads were dirty with the coal keels and the dryads' tresses torn and dishevelled with the rough blasts of Boreas"; but though her lot there had not fallen on a fair ground she was bound to admit "it was a goodly heritage, and made a decent figure when it arrived at the shop of Hoare & Co. in Fleet Street."

To Mrs. Scott

DENTON, *Sept.* 10.

I find the P. of W. did not appear much at Brighthelmston. Mrs. Fitzherbert was there in an humble style with few Servants, and in shabby old carriage, and had not any great attentions paid to her by the company, which indeed was not numerous; it is supposed that the place w^{d} have been more frequented if people had not wish'd to avoid an intimate acquaintance with the lady or her lover. Her brother was with her, it is said she looks melancholy. Some French Esprit fort said on his deathbed, he was going in search of un grand peutetre. This lady has ventured on a grand peutetre.

Poor Mrs. Fitzherbert was much more sinned against than sinning, and her "grand peut-être" was at least inspired by an affection—probably the only genuine one his life ever achieved—for her worthless spouse. Just before his death, George IV. earnestly requested the Duke of Wellington to see that he was buried in the night-shirt he was wearing. After his death, the Duke noticed a red silk ribbon about his neck, and attached to it, beneath the shirt, was found a tiny locket containing Mrs. Fitzherbert's portrait. It seems possible that the woman he had most deeply wronged was, after all, the one woman he had really cared for.

DENTON.

We are to-day very busy in preparing a dinner for 500 persons, none of whom will I believe find fault with our meat or our cooking, tho' there are not any dainties or very relishing sauces ; 12 enormous plumb puddings and as many with meat on them, and pyes innumerable, a sheep and more than the meat of one ox is roasting and boiling at different fires with 2 bushells of pottatoes and other garden things, 2 Hogsheads of pure ale stand ready to supply the Toasts that are to be drunk after dinner, besides a notable quantity of ale and beer mixd, to drink with their dinner. My house is as savoury as a cooks shop, tho' the great oven is in the offices, and a great part of the victuals dressed there, and some at my tenant's who keeps a publick House. Montagu says he smelt the good odour of our feast a quarter of a mile from hence as he was returning from his ride. . . . Mr. Lunardi announced his intention of mounting his air balloon at Newcastle a few days ago, many thousands spectators assembled to see it, but alas ! a young man, who was in a great degree the comfort and support of his Parents and family, having twisted a cord that held the balloon round his arm was snatched up by it, and before the faces of his Father, Mother and sisters let fall from the height of 60 yards and killed ; the balloon sunk soon after. As I was airing in the Whiskey I saw the catastrophe of the Balloon, but happily not the sad tragedy of the young man. I am surprised that the Corporation of Newcastle will permit any one to play these tricks.

A later letter adds :

The news papers did not represent half the horrors of the disaster of the Air Balloon, the young man who perish'd was the support and comfort of his Parents and 4 sisters, before whose faces he fell ; he was to have been married in a few days to a young woman of good fortune ; she was informed of the disaster by the voice of the mob. The Corporation of Newcastle were much to blame in having permitted Mr. Lunardi to play his tricks here. Many thousand hands were by this means taken off their labour. I must say for the honour of my Pittmen they were not diverted from their duty either by idle curiosity, or bad example.

1787

"THE OLD ABBESS"—SUNDAY SCHOOLS—HANNAH MORE—LOUIS XVI

Domestic affairs. Montagu's Commons speech. Mrs. Montagu's social activities. Sandleford. School treats. Primate's visit. Mrs. Vesey's illness. Letter from Hannah More. Montagu goes north. The French King and Parliament. Mr. Mackreth. Mrs. Vesey. Lady Clermont. Calonne. Wraxall on his visit to Paris. Archives of the Revolution. Hayley's Dialogues. Christmas and New Year dinners. Soame Jenyns and Dr. Johnson.

After Matthew Montagu's marriage, his aunt's correspondence naturally dealt spaciously in domesticities. Her affection for her daughter, as his wife is henceforth called, increased with further acquaintance, and in many ways this epoch of the nesting of the young couple seems to have been for "the old Abbess of Sandleford," as she now described herself, amongst the happiest periods of her life. Mrs. Montagu junior "bred," in the phrase of the day, with praiseworthy regularity once a year, and her aunt's particular friends are annually and punctually informed of all the details of maternity, milk supplies, wet nurses, and so on.

In February 1787 Matthew Montagu seconded the Address in the House of Commons, and his aunt was overwhelmed with felicitations :

The event occasioned so many congratulations, notes and visits I had not for some days a quarter of an hour in the morning at my disposal ; almost every member of the House of Commons of my acquaintance, and many peers calling on me on the occasion, and yesterday at the Drawing Room I was congratulated upon it by the Queen, the Ld. Chancellor and the ministers, besides the Marquiss of Stafford and almost everybody I met there. . . . I assure you I had not the least share in the speech.

The "old abbess" was, however, by no means inclined to be laid on the shelf just yet :

I have nobly endured all changes of weather and all the variety of amusements of this town. I had one subscription concert at my house last Friday. I was at a great assembly on Wednesday night, at the Drawing Room yesterday, shall be at our Concert tonight, at Lady Amherst's tomorrow, and on Sunday shall have a large party to dine with me. I have twice dined with a very agreeable party at Manchester Square, I have, indeed, declined some assemblies, but I think my Journal on the whole may rival that of the fine lady in the Spectator, only I have not worked a tulip, but as Betty Tull has done it for me, I think it quite as well. . . . Mrs. Delany has been very ill for a fortnight, and at 87 there is not much hope of recovery.

In May Mrs. Montagu went for the summer as usual to Sandleford, and on the Fourth of June, the Royal Birthday :

The old character of a Lady Bountiful becomes me better than the glittering court robes, so I celebrate the day in an antique style ; an 150 boys have already been singing God save the King as they passed the lawn to the Grove, and as soon as the rest arrive, for all my Guests are not yet come, Roast and boil'd beef, mutton puddings and pyes will be served up to them on long tables in the Grove ; their masters will also have a table for them. In the evening my work people from the grounds will have a plentiful supper.

From her Sister

CATTON, *June the* 11*th.*

I think none of the Galas celebrated his Majesty's birthday so well as yours, none gave equal real pleasure to the same number, and no evil can arise from it, which it would be difficult to assert of those more splendid ; and I dare say none of your Guests behaved in so ungentlemanly a manner as some young Personages at those splendid fêtes. Their conduct is shocking beyond all example, it is so very strange one wou'd almost think them actuated by malice as well as profligacy, and that they are endeavouring to derange again the understanding of a Parent who cannot be insensible to a conduct so infamous. The D. of C. is a happy addition to the Crew; he will vulgarize their enormities beyond what cou'd have enterd the thoughts of any but a Tar. I hear that at Boodles fête the eldest was carried off dead drunk after having cascaded most copiously in the Room. The youngest was not less freed from the plague of human reason, but capable of walking about the room swearing to so violent a degree that he terrified many of the company.

From Manchester Square her niece sent a long account of the Ambassador's gala; which had narrowly escaped postponement owing to a false report in the newspapers from France, "to which I gave perfect credit and repined extreamly that the Dauphin should have chosen so very improper a day to make his exit."

Later in July she writes:

This morning knowing Mr. Thompson would preach at Thatcham, I went thither to feed on spiritual fare with which we were excellently supplied. . . . I hear poor Lord Macartney suffers still great pain from his wound. I suppose Mr. Hastings cannot be without some uneasiness from the undecided state of his affairs. Our late Ministers destroying the letters which would have rendered some of our Traitors liable to the punishment they deserved is a crime too black for any man but a mock patriot.

The Sunday school children were encouraged to regular attendance in orthodox style by a feast in July:

I have now crammed every child with meat plumb pudding and good advice, all which I hope will be well digested and turn to wholesome nurture. While I was dealing out my food and counsel Lord and Lady Falmouth, Mr. and Mrs. Crewe and some friends of theirs came to make me a visit but I could not prevail on them to dine with me so I have filld the hungry with good things and the rich are gone empty away ; however the rich have consumed my time.

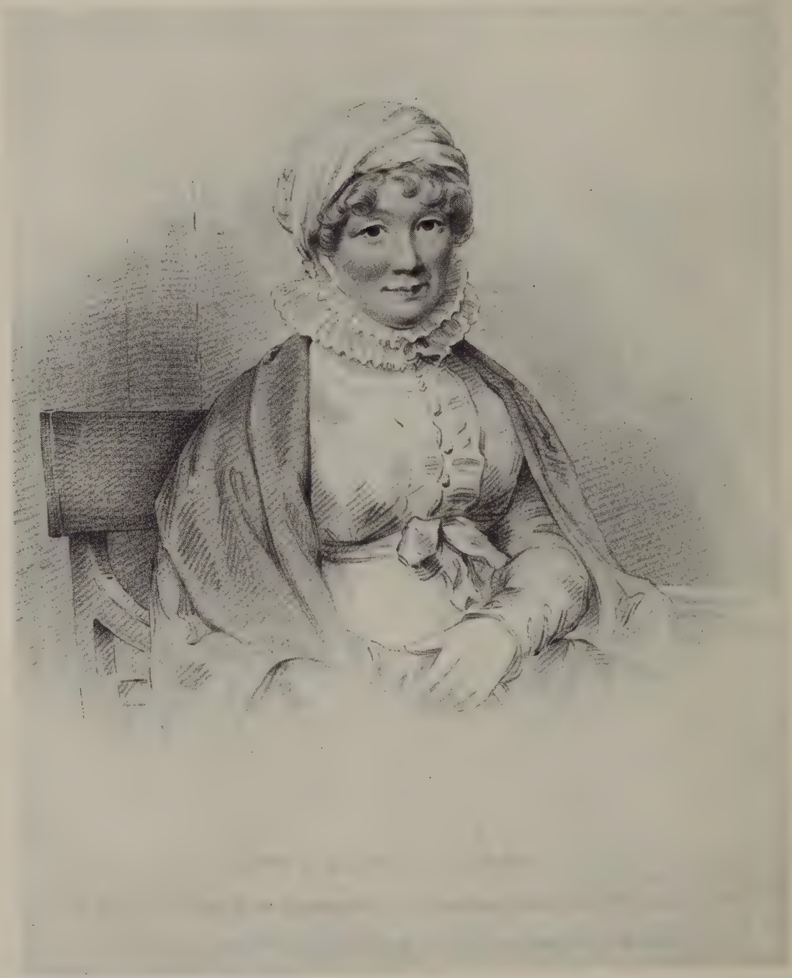
The children—having been clearly informed that school truants would be excluded from these feasts—attended their lessons most regularly ; many learned to read in nine months, and though " I confess they exalted their voices when they read to me to a degree that was rather too much for my nerves, the thanks they gave me for their entertainment was as polite almost as you could have expected from our great schools." Thanks to Mrs. Montagu's pyes and plumb pudding the Newbury Sunday schools at any rate were a gratifying success, and the heart of good Mr. Raikes rejoiced.

The Primate, who had been ill this summer at Bath and Hot Wells, paid a brief visit to Sandleford at the end of the month, but was unable to attend the christening of her " grandson," to whom he was godfather.

Mrs. Vesey's condition since the death of her husband had, as we have seen, steadily declined. She was still perpetually in tears, could hardly be persuaded to take the air, would not go to Tunbridge as ordered, and " fretts so much and is so full of apprehensions, her life is very unhappy." Her memory had gone, and her condition was a source of despair to Mrs. Hancock and distress to all her many friends.

August visitors at Sandleford included Dr. Warton and his wife, Dr. Beattie and his son, and Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Smelt ; but besides these invited guests there were so many casual callers, even in the mornings, that " though some of them obligingly brought me fine feathers they hindered the further flight of my grey goose quill "—a disservice for which her biographer is not inclined to blame them too severely.

There are many letters from Hannah More in this collection, and room may be found for part of one here :



HANNAH MORE
From a drawing by Josiah Slater

Bristol, 24 *August*.

My dear Madam,—I am not quite so unworthy of your last delightful letter as I appear to be; for Mrs. Boscawen carried it with her to Badmington; and when it *did* arrive at Bristol I was not here to receive, and be thankful for it, and answer it.

I have been waiting impatiently for a letter from Mrs. Garrick to make an assignation for our Sandleford rencontre. I have not heard from her for a long time. . . . If you do not forbid me, I look forward to the middle of Sept^{br} (about the 15th) as the pleasant period when I shall hope for the great honour and pleasure of waiting on you for a week, and of enjoying that charming conversation which has made up some of the whitest and brightest hours of my life.

I rejoyce with exceeding great joy in the addition Mrs. M. Montagu has made to your blessings; her own safe recovery is I am sure not the least of them. She has a most amiable and rightly turned mind, and has escaped the corruptions of the world more compleatly than most young ladies of her fortune and accomplishments ever did. Mr. Walpole writes me that there is a new and rich mine lately dug up, of Letters of Mad^{e} de Sevigne, but that his faith in their authenticity is not *quite* firm. Indeed in this age of literary imposture, even believers grow sceptical.

I know you will think it a very pretty circumstance when I tell you that I have Dr. Warton, not Thomas of Oxenford, but Joseph of Winton in my neighbourhood; he has lost none of that delightful enthusiasm which makes him so singularly pleasant. He has been gallanting so much with the Wood Nymphs of this picturesque country, of whom he is passionately enamoured that he has laid himself up with the gout; & is consuming the remnant of his too short holidays on his couch. He talks of Mrs. Montagu and Sandleford with the old raptures.

I had the pleasure of talking of you yesterday with Your friend the Duchess Dow^{r} of Beaufort, with whom I dined, and who I think grows younger every time I see her; she charged me with her best compliments; Mrs. Boscawen has spread the fame of Sandleford in its present perfection of beauty far and near. . . . Yours ever, my dearest Madam,

H. More.

In the autumn, Montagu went north to attend to his aunt's colliery affairs, spending some time to recruit his health at Harrogate before returning to London, to which his aunt had now come back from Berkshire.

> I find everybody doing justice to Mr. Pitt's conduct, and proud of the figure Great Britain makes in Europe. Miss Cravens assured me that when they were in Paris neither the King nor Queen nor le Comte d'Artois durst come to Paris, they are so odious to the people. . . . We abuse Ministers, they address their menaces to the Sovereign himself.

Montagu met William Wilberforce at Harrogate, who offered him a place in his carriage to town, and thus began a lasting and influential friendship.

> Mr. Macrath call'd here one morning, having company at home he could not stay dinner. We determined to take advantage of the first fine day to return the visit, Mrs. Matthew Montagu and I went in my Whiskey, and had a most delightful jaunt. Mr. Macrath was not at home, but we took a view of the place, which had been improved by Mr. Browns best elève Mr. Richmond. There is a very noble piece of water and a great deal of wood; with two such features no place can be ugly. The house is very comfortable, and Mr. Macrath, once a waiter at Arthurs, is now a senator in the British Parliament, and an opulent Esquire. He is a pleasant agreable man, and tho' his acquisitions have been as considerable, and as sudden as a nabobs, he has not the luxury nor the languor which generally characterises the Asiatick plunderers. It is said Macrath has acquired a fortune of 10,000£ a year; he got 40,000£ with his wife. I suppose his riches have not arisen from the purest sources, but he lives handsomely, and is charitable and generous. I presume he must have joined with the Jews in lending money to gamblers. . . .

Mrs. Montagu was much perturbed over Mrs. Vesey's mental condition. The excessive grief of widows over inconstant spouses is not an uncommon phenomenon, but while the Sylph's tears were incessant, her brain continuity had broken down, and her memory failed her more and more:

Her solitary hours are passd chiefly in weeping; in the Society of her Friends she finds some degree of pleasure; but when she attempts to enter into conversation, her memory is so gone that she is soon obliged to stop. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Cole, Lady Clermont, Mr. Walpole, and many of her Friends often call on her. I dined with her yesterday, and have passd two whole evenings with her, and shall spend much of my time with her, till the Town is so full that there will not be any danger of her being alone.

. . . Lady Claremont is going to Paris for a few weeks, her Royal Friend dares not enter the Gates of that City. The King and Queen of France, and Comte d'Artois, are so hated by the Mob they cannot venture themselves in their belle Ville de Paris. Mr. de Calonne is much caressd here, but I wish he had retired to some other Country, for he is giving great attention to our Manufactures, and will steal their secrets if he can.

Mr. and Mrs. Cole were probably the Duke of Marlborough's chaplain and his wife. Lady Clermont was the popular al fresco entertainer who invited "three hundred dear friends" to take tea and walk in St. James's Park. She was a great friend of Marie Antoinette, and it was she who at a card party at Gunnersbury pushed her snuff-box across the Princess Amelia to the Duke of Portland, who was "dying for a pinch." "Pray, Madam," cried her Royal Highness, "where did you learn that breeding? Did the Queen of France teach it to you?"

Charles de Calonne was the French Controller-General of Finance, who was soon, as the outcome of his years in office, to address to its king these pregnant sentences, which I quote from Louis Madelin's *French Revolution*: 'France is a kingdom composed of separate states and counties with mixed administrations, the provinces of which know nothing of each other . . . where the richest class is most lightly taxed, where privilege has upset all equilibrium, where it is impossible to have any constant rule or common will: necessarily it is a most imperfect kingdom, very full of abuses, and in its present condition *impossible to govern.*"

The Comte de Calonne had not visited England for nothing.

The French war cloud, which had again been threatening invasion this year, was now beginning to lower black over Paris itself.

November 30th.

Lady Clermont had kiss'd hands at Court, intending a week ago to set out for Paris in obedience to an invitation she had received from the Queen of France, through Madame de Polignac, but from the same channel she has since had intimation that from discontents and confusions now subsisting her situation would be very disagreable, and that she had better not come. Last Monday sennight Louis seize went at 9 in the morning to the palais and made the following propositions to le Parlement; un don gratuit of 120 millions of livres, a restoration of the original edict of Nantes and universal toleration, and by lettres patentes to create the Archbishop of Toulouse premier Ministre, as Cardinal Fleury was. Le Parlement desired to debate on these propositions and did debate them till 11 at night, when his Majesty, weary and angry and seeing no probability of getting them registerd, returnd to Versailles. He has since sent le Duc dOrleans and le Duc de Bourbon into exile. These disturbances may arise to a rebellion, or subside in a vaudeville on le pont, where sometimes the publick wrath has evaporated in rhymes.

But it was not to be exactly a vaudeville this time!

To Matthew Montagu, M.P.

the 20th.

I met Mr. Wraxall and Major Reynel at Sr Lucas Pepys Sunday night; you may imagine the *Map of Nations was unfurld.* Mr. Wraxall, who left Paris but a few days ago, gives such an account of the situation of affairs, and the temper of the people, as makes one imagine there will be some great revolution in France. The french King, I must not call him his most Christian Majesty, is continually drunk, in this state his Queen, and le Comte d'Artois, and other favorites of her Majesty, obtaind orders for immense sums which Mr.

de Calonne was obliged to pay to them, hence proceeded the enormous deficiency, and from the sources of this disorder in the Finances, and the means proposed to supply that deficiency, arose the publick discontent, and indignation. Monsieur, who has opposed the new scheme of taxation, and has not partaken of the plunder which has reduced the finances, is the Idol of the Publick, and it is often said in conversation, that the only remedy to their misfortunes would be to make Monsieur Regent on account of the Kings imbecillity, and at his Majestys demise, to make him his successor, on account of the illegitimacy of the Dauphin etc. Some reports concerning the particular condition of his Majestys Person, and the profligacy of the Queen, make the affair of the Childrens legitimacy very doubtfull, and therefore a Revolution not improbable. Report assigns to each Royal Infant a different Father, but if her Majesty is as bad as is reported, they may all keep to their usual title *les enfans de France.*

This account from Wraxall of the state of things in Paris in the autumn of 1787 is interesting chiefly as illustrating—if indeed any fresh illustration were necessary—the extent to which political bias manipulates personal character and distorts the actualities. Wraxall in the *Posthumous Memoirs* merely says : "I passed part of the autumn in Paris, where the utmost effervescence not unmixed with gloomy apprehensions of futurity began already to diffuse their influence over society." But when he comes to unfurl the map of nations to Mrs. Montagu, the lesson in political geography consists largely in aspersions on the King, Queen, and Royal family, entirely unsupported by evidence and obviously emanating from purely partisan sources.

Nowhere, surely, in exploring the records of a great national movement, has the student to thread his way so warily and suspiciously as through those of this next decade in France. Of none, perhaps, is the available material more abundant ; in none has it been utilised to more divergent conclusions.

To her Sister

Dec. the 31.

You do me unmerited honour in suspecting me of the dialogue you mention between Johnson and Ld Chesterfield. They are well contrasted ; the one endeavoured by pleasing manners to grace Vice, the other by his brutal insolent manners disgraced Virtue, and by his low superstition and bigotry even renderd piety less respected. It would puzzle one to determine whether he who placed the Syrens in the Temple of Vice, or he who put the Gorgons head at the entrance of the Temple of Virtue did most mischief. I wish much to see the Dialogue, pray let me know where it is to be got ; as I thought a weak hand might destroy the thin spurious plausibilities of Lord Chesterfields system I once intended to attack it, but I have been too idle and indolent to undertake any work. Mr. Jenyns is much regretted by all who knew him, or read his Works, Poor Mrs. Jenyns was at first quite stunned with her loss ; she is now resignd, and patient, happy she can never be in this World. She must have some comfort in reflecting that in his latter days he left the Muses for the Evangelists. . . .

The Two Dialogues, containing a comparative view of the Lives, Characters and Writings of the late Earl of Chesterfield and Dr. Samuel Johnson, published this year, were by S. Hayley. The young couple were recruiting at Southampton at Christmas time, and in lieu of their presence contributed crabs and prawns to the feast at Montagu House, where " the Bishop of Llandaffe, Lord and Lady Mulgrave, Mr. Smelt, Mr. Cholmly, Mr. Langton and Lady Rothes, Mr. Jernegan, Mr. Ord and a Doctor Blagden, a most agreeable and universally well-informed man whom I met at Lord Mulgrave's," were guests ; whilst for New Year's Day, Mrs. David Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Hannah More, and Horace Walpole were to help her to inaugurate 1788.

An earlier December letter records :

Mr. Soame Jenyns died this morning. The world has lost an ingenious author and his friends and society a most amiable man. I pity his widow greatly; they were always together and always good humoured and affectionate. This world will be a Desart to her; her consolation will be she will not have long probably to remain in it, as she is far advanced in years. This couple one wishd like Baucis and Philemon to have changed at the same moment.

Lord Mulgrave above mentioned was the gallant sailor who had commanded the *Racehorse* in the polar expedition in which Nelson served as a midshipman; Bennet Langton was Dr. Johnson's amiable but sometimes "objurgated" friend; the Countess of Rothes (Jane Elizabeth Leslie) was the wife of Sir Lucas Pepys, brother of Mrs. Montagu's friend William Weller Pepys; "Jernegan" was the older spelling of Jerningham; and Edward Jerningham was Lord Chesterfield's poetical correspondent, and a culprit of many rhymes, patron of many needy clients, philanderer of many "transitory loves," whom Fanny Burney describes as "a mighty delicate gentleman, looks to be painted, and is all daintification in manner, speech and dress," a "pink and white poet" who sang to his own accompaniment on the harp, and discoursed on the mild tenour of Christianity. Ord was the Suffolk antiquary who contributed largely to the British Museum; Dr. (afterwards Sir Charles) Blagden, the Edinburgh physician from whom there are many later letters of interest. Soame Jenyns is perhaps chiefly remembered by his speculations on what Boswell called "the excruciating question, the origin of Evil," for which he was severely castigated by Dr. Johnson. On the death of the latter, Jenyns took his revenge in a widely circulated epitaph:

Here lies poor Johnson. Reader have a care
Tread lightly lest you rouse a sleeping bear:
Religious, moral, generous and humane
He was—but self-sufficient, rude and vain,
Ill bred and overbearing in dispute,
A scholar and a Christian—yet a brute.

To which the zealous Boswell had replied in an "Epitaph for a creature not quite dead yet":

> Here lies a little ugly nauseous elf
> Who judging only from its wretched self
> Feebly attempted, petulant and vain
> The Origin of Evil to explain.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Then stunk and fretted in expiring snuff
> And blink'd at Johnson with its last poor puff.

Twentieth-century literature would be vastly enlivened by some of these paulo-post-mortem amenities.

Our Mrs. Carter, who had, on occasion, a touch of mordant wit, wrote:

> I hear at the fashionable clubs it is gold to silver, since the appearance of Mr. Soame Jenyn's book, that the Christian Religion is true. These, alas, are not the people to whom its being true will convey any advantage.

Mrs. Montagu had once written very sagely:

> It is the misfortune of women who are reputed to be learned to have the fools of both sexes, and the witlings of both sexes for their enemies, and they must be upon their guard against ridicule, which envy is ever endeavouring to throw upon them, and from this circumstance I have been cautious of the persons whom I admitted into my familiarity; ridicule is to be caught as some distempers are, either by contact or by the breath. One catches it by keeping company with a fool, or by the indiscreet conversation and reports of an imprudent friend.

1788

THE KING'S ILLNESS—A TALK WITH THE QUEEN—HASTINGS' TRIAL, AND WESTMINSTER ELECTIONS

The Matthew Montagus at Shooter's Hill. Primate visits Sandleford. The King's illness. Warren Hastings' trial. A visit to Windsor. Westminster election. Letter from William Wilberforce. Mrs. Montagu meets the Queen. The King's condition improved. Betty Tull. Mr. Jerningham.

The letters of this year are again chiefly of domestic interest. Matthew had purchased a villa at Shooter's Hill, where his wife was awaiting the arrival of a third olive branch, and the aunt at Sandleford was in charge of the two elder boys, to her great delight. The Primate visited her there, but his declining health filled her with anxieties, which were further augmented by her loyal concern upon the disorder of the King in the autumn.

Mrs. Montagu's loyalty was ever unimpeachable, and some of the extracts of this period forcibly recall passages in Fanny Burney's diaries of her years at Court:

I am sure I cannot say anything which will give you so much pleasure as a good account of his Majestys daily progress towards a recovery; which from the best authority I am enabled to do. The news papers will have informed you how boldly faction stepp'd forward, and how disgracefully they have been obliged to retreat. The sad circumstance of our excellent Sovereigns disorder, in our hour of the greatest publick prosperity, has really so oppressed my mind that I little know or care what is going forward in the World. I have visited only my most intimate Friends, and our conversation has been on the calamity of our Country, and the afflictions of their Majesties, and the Princesses. I have heard as you have done, such accounts of the great excellence of our Sovereigns heart, laid open in his late condition, as endears him as a Man, whose misfortunes would ill support, if separated from the publick interest.

The trial of Warren Hastings and the King's illness were the outstanding public events in London in 1788. Mrs. Montagu, as we have seen, had already made the acquaintance of the impeached governor, and for once she and Edmund Burke held different briefs:

Westminster Hall is to be fitted up for the tryal of Mr. Hastings; Mr. Burke is much enraged that Mr. Francis was rejected in that affair, but his rancour and malice to Mr. Hastings was too well known to admitt of any testimony of his.

Mr. (afterwards Sir Philip) Francis was the best reputed "Junius." He had quarrelled with and fought Hastings and brought a great fortune back from India. Mrs. Montagu went to Sandleford in May, and paid visits to Lady Ailesbury at Park Place and to Windsor, the latter evoking a characteristic comment:

I was more fortunate in respect to Weather while I was at Salt Hill; but an Inn is not a place for philosophical reveries, so I visited Windsor Castle, and went from thence to see Cumberland Lodge, where I had not been of many years. I was not permitted to enter, but I did not repent of my scheme, as it carried me through Queen Elizabeths Walk, now call'd the *long* walk; indeed the Walk of Wisdom is a long, and a strait walk; and the modern Statesmen, and modern Browns, love the waving line; I adhere to old Bess and the strait line, where every step leads to its proper end. . . .

I took the Orphan of the Castle in my post chaise, and she entertaind and interested me very much. The fable is admirable, the characters have not those distinguishing features which you find in Miss Burney, Fielding, and Richardson's works.

A letter from Matthew to his aunt, written from Shooter's Hill on July 24, gives an idea of eighteenth-century electioneering, the poll lasting several days :

On Monday I went to town to canvass my tradesmen for Lord Hood ; The opposite party are busy and determin'd in this business in proportion to their want of employment in other matters. It is something more to reduce a great city than a simple woman ; but cities are frail and fickle as well as the fair. Lord John Townshend is perhaps the best canvasser in England. I remember to have seen him in this occupation at Cambridge, where the insinuating address of his manners made a grave university overlook the blemishes of his character and chuse an espiegle debauché to represent a synod of Sages. If old men in cauliflower wigs are led astray, why should we quarrel with the Persephone young ladies for listening to the same eloquence. But to speak seriously it does not speak much for the morals of the times, that such a man should be a formidable opponent to the brave defender of this country, and especially at a time so free from public discontent. But I hope the event of the matter will prove more auspicious to decency ; they have made a bold push at the onset and out of 9000 voters it is no wonder they should gain a majority on the first day or two, while sober quiet people are frightened away by the boisterous behaviour of bravoes.

From her Sister

I shall be very sorry if Ld Hood should be vanquish'd by an Antagonist whose character ought to disqualify him for opposing so worthy a man. I hope Lady John does not follow her *Gracious* Cousins example and canvass for votes, for tho' Lady Hoods antient graces coud not contend with Lady Johns powers, yet from the freedoms of speech usual on such occasions, she might be frequently reminded of events she wou'd certainly wish to forget ; I am sorry for the expence which must accrue to Lord Hood, and which I think he coud not bear if he had not a friend in Mr. Barwell whose purse is ever open to his friends ; but it is a melancholly circumstance to his Son who has a family, and a very amiable worthy Wife.

Lord John Townshend had a majority of over 800, a figure beyond hope of extinction by a scrutiny. His success was celebrated by a disgraceful riot.

To Matthew Montagu

At Ld Porchester on sunday I met Mr. Damer and one of the Wyndhams, and I see the party triumphs much on what has happend at the Westminster Election. How happend it that Mr. Pitt did not judge better of his Interest there? I hear the Influenza begins again to afflict the City of London; pray do not venture to Town if it is much infected, for tho few have dyed of it those years it has been in England, yet it is a tiresome disorder, and leaves disagreeable relicks.

Alexander Hood was defeated for Westminster on being made Admiralty Lord. Lady John Townshend was Georgiana, daughter of William Poyntz of Midgham, Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, being the daughter of Margaret, Stephen Poyntz's daughter. All the Poyntz girls were lovely, and Susannah, Lady Hood (who was married in 1749) would have been heavily handicapped as a canvasser. But Lord Hood regained his seat two years later; and meanwhile Lady Hood had the satisfaction of remembering that in the envenomed Westminster election four years previously, though the irresistible Georgiana had helped to bring Fox in second on the poll, Lord Hood had still headed it. That famous election had lasted for forty days, during which Covent Garden and the whole neighbourhood of the hustings was a pandemonium, trade was suspended, shops closed, doors and windows barricaded, bands and banners paraded the streets, and mob violence and drunken revelry were the order of the day and night. In these sober days of the ballot, a true picture of the Westminster election of 1784, if reproduced on the film, would probably be hailed by the generality of citizens as a wildly exaggerated and improbable caricature.

From William Wilberforce

PARIS, *Aug. 16th.*

I fancy my Character as a Vagabond is so well established, that you will not be surprised at seeing this letter dated Paris. Finding myself disengaged for the Months of August and September, I thought I could not do better than visit some parts of this Kingdom which I had not yet seen. I embarked myself and my Horses at Brighton and landed at Dieppe. I travelled through Normandy on Horseback, came here on the 6th, shall stay about a fortnight longer, and return to England by a different road.

What shall I say to You of France? I hardly dare on so slight a view to give any opinion with respect to publick affairs. You must at least consider it as nothing more than the result of the first Coup d'Oeil. In Normandy all was anxiety and distress, but all was quiet. All the Members of the Parliament de Rouen were banished to their Country Houses, no Person being allowed to sleep out of his own. They are 30 in number. The opposition to Government is I believe very universal. An Edict appeared a few days ago suspending La Cour Pleniare, and ordering the States General to be assembled on the 1st May 1789. This gives great satisfaction, but more is still wanted. The return of the Parliament it is hoped will soon follow. Unless it does, there must still elapse nine Months, with a total suspension of all administration of Justice, for at present there is none in Paris. The general opinion I believe is, that the Court will give up the right of imposing any Tax without the consent of the Nation, another point which the opposition hope to carry, is the appropriation of the Revenue, a third is the Abolition of Lettres de Cachet. Many Persons are also of opinion that the States General once assembled will not be soon dismissed. I find Neckar is very popular, Calonne is the reverse. I am taking some pains to find out the views of Persons of consequence in this Country about the Slave Trade. Neckar in the Publication in 1785 started an opinion in favour of the abolition of it. This has been adopted by many, and I believe the business would by this time have engaged the general attention to a high degree, if that attention had not been more deeply engaged on subjects of still greater consequence. Those subjects, as you will readily believe, occupy the thoughts and conversation of every Person to such a degree, that nothing else can be attended to. They occupy my thoughts a good deal. . . .

To Mrs. Carter (?)

I made them [the Montagus at Shooter's Hill] a morning visit last week, but the only adventure worth describing to you happen'd at Kew. I went down to take leave of Mr. Smelt and Mrs. Cholmly, and just after ringing their Gate bell, My Man Wm said he saw, the Queens carriage at a little distance, and he supposed she was at Mr. Smelts so I ordered my chaise to turn back, but Mr. Smelts footman ran and stoppd it, saying her Majesty on hearing the Bell had given orders that if it was Mrs. Montagu she must be told the Queen insisted on her coming in, then came another Servant repeating the same gracious command, so I obeyd, and after staying a short time, which appeard to me the shorter from her Majestys obliging address, I attempted to retire ; but the Queen told me I shd not leave her, and I enjoyd her very sensible and pleasing conversation near two hours. The Princess Royal came in after having taken a walk in Kew Garden, and sat down on the Sopha beside me, the Pss Augusta and the D: of Clarence were also of the party, and I was pleased to see the Queen surrounded by such a Progeny. You may suppose the great events on the Continent made the principal subject of conversation, and the good sense and propriety with which her Majesty express'd herself charmd me, the more as I was convinced, had France had such a King and Queen as ours their Revolution wd not have happend. I wishd time and opportunity wd have happend to have conversed with the Princess Royal on the events of former ages, for she is deeply read in History. On thursday I went to the Drawing Room. The Queen expressd as the weather was wet and windy a concern least I shd catch cold but I always go in my chair to St James's and I did not get any harm. I was glad to see the King looking in perfect health and seeming very chearfull.

During this October, however, the King's illness of 1765 recurred in a much aggravated and alarming form, and during November there were periods of acute delirium, necessitating absolute restraint.

Dr. Willis, a clergyman and physician who had kept an asylum in Lincolnshire for many years with most successful results, first saw the King on December 5th, and at once obtained ascendancy over his patient, of whose prospects of recovery he formed the most encouraging opinion, asserting it to be almost certain within eighteen months at longest. At Pitt's wise suggestion, adopting the proposal of Fox and the Opposition, a Committee of the House of Commons (not the Lords, as Mrs. Montagu supposed) was formed on the 8th to examine the physicians, and Dr. Willis gave his evidence before them on the following day; on the 10th the Committee reported to the House, and therewith began the long and embittered struggle over the Regency and the Prince of Wales, already, indeed, initiated by the arch apostasy of Thurlow.

Tuesday the 9th [*December*].

To the great joy of all our Good Kings good people, his Majesty is much better. Dr. Willis prescriptions, and his mode of conducting his royal Patient have had the happiest effect. I will now give you a most authentick account of what passd from the beginning of his illness to this time. The first warmth and vehemence appeard (in a moderate degree) to one of the Princesses as they were taking the air together in the morning. At 4 or 5 o'clock, when the P. of W. came, his M. mentiond with great warmth mixd wth tenderness whatever he had disapproved in the young gentlemans behaviour, on whom it made such an impression he fainted, and his amiable mother fell into hystericks; with some difficulty this afflicted parent was perswaded to go to bed, there he lay restless and violent. The medical people were calld in, found the pulse too high, but when it was reduced the vehemence did not proportionably abate. Constraint and contradiction irritated more the irritated nerves, but it is believed that had all that happend been in the case of a private person, insanity had never been mention'd in so sudden a manner. It seems that some person since the removal to Kew, had happily named this Dr. Willis, who was educated at Oxford with an intention of following the physical line, but being offerd a living of £500 a year took orders; however having studied physick he applied himself to the cure of persons of disorderd intellects, and has had most wonderful success, and consequent reputation. When he was presented to his patient he received him with apparent displeasure, told him he knew he was a mad doctor, and why did he quit his sacred function, and the more important cure of souls to follow the other? The Doctor answerd, because he thought he c^{d} be more beneficial to mankind in it. In short the patient and the Doctor grew very well together, and he took his medicine at night, was much better next morning, and desired the Doctor to tell the Queen so, afterwards askd the Doctor if he might write a letter to her, which was permitted and the letter was perfectly rational; complaind he had not been allowd to shave himself, this the Doctor permitted him to do, and when he had done it he gave the razor into the Doctors hands. At times he is restless and violent, but in general his conversation is very sensible. There seems no doubt but this derangement, brought on by too much exercise and a diet unequal to supporting it, will in time go off, and there does not seem any intention at present to appoint a Regency. L^{d} North has done himself honour, asserting that it w^{d} be highly improper and mischievous to the publick to make any change in the Ministry. The physicians are to be examined before the House of Lords to day. How his Majesty does to day I have not heard, but Lady Harcourt who calld on me this morning, promised to let me know if she got any account from Kew, and I will insert it if it comes before the post goes out. My accounts are such as have been given of this important affair from several persons who are perfectly informd. I forgot to mention that it is thought his M. had hurt himself by too frequently taking laudanum; alas! Regal and paternal cares often want an anodyne.

Dec. 17.

Poor Betty Tull is I fear going to take her flight to another World. As a Virgin she might claim the White plumes of the Ostrich for her Hearse, but her triumphs over the whole featherd Race may give her pretensions to every feather, of every bird, from the Eagle to the Wren, from the croaking Raven to the chattering Parrot. Macaws she has transformed into Tulips, Kingfishers into blue bells by her so potent art. But alas! feathers fall, flowers fade, and artists dye! I have put Betty under the care of Mr. Farquhar, but he does not give me much hope of her recovery.

Mr. Jerningham to Mr. Smelt

December the 24
from my Room Parnassus high.

Mr. Jerningham presents his Compliments to Mr. Smelt and hopes his sending him the enclosed Lines will atone for his having listened to a Conversation and made use of a Hint He picked up, but being very Ambitious to keep his Situation as Poet Laureat to Minerva and knowing how difficult it is for a Poet to get a good Dinner Invita Minerva (not invited by Minerva) He was afraid that the thought having something New in it might fall into Meaner Hands at this Season when, only, so many Poets, like the Glastonbury Thorn, produce their Flowers. Mr. Smelt will observe that The Numbers are more irregularly neglected than the Author's generally are but besides the avoiding the Inconvenience hinted at by his Predecessor Pope in that Line—and every Blockhead knows me by my style ; there are many Reasons like those of Sappho in her Epistle to Phaon for adapting the Measure to the Subject, and this is Sermone Propriore Pedestri, should the Author have the Honour hereafter of conversing with Master Langton his Symposium shall be in the Language and with the Poetical Flow of Plato.

Mr. Smelt is requested upon no account to hint at the existence of this trifle lest it should be invidiously imputed to *Coak-sing* the *Lady*.

Edward Jerningham has already been mentioned as a guest at Montagu House, whither he was constantly charged with messages and reminders to Mrs. Montagu from his good-humoured but rather boring correspondent the Rev. Robert Potter, whom she had introduced to Dr. Johnson. The ceremony, according to Park, was not encouraging. Mrs. Montagu, after two futile attempts to obtain the Doctor's attention : " Dr. Johnson, Mr. Potter, the translator of Aeschylus."

Dr. Johnson: " Well, madam, and what then ? "

The allusion to Coak-sing the Lady is obscure, but may possibly be a naughty reference to Lady Mary Coke, whom her father-in-law, the Earl of Leicester, spoke of as " Our Virgin Mary."

1789

WILBERFORCE AND MATTHEW MONTAGU—THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Doings in France. The fishwomen of Paris. French refugees. Miss Reynolds. Wilberforce's projected visit to Paris with Montagu. Matthew Montagu's political ambitions. Wraxall on his aspirations. Wilberforce writes to Mrs. Montagu. A political meeting at Hampstead. The Paris tour abandoned. M. Necker. Lord Orford's pictures.

French affairs of course figure largely in the correspondence of this and the following years; and though there is nothing of historical importance, the touch of reality given by the narrative of contemporary events may justify a few extracts here and there.

Jany. the 19th.

The D: of Orleans has been endeavoring to raise money amongst our Rich Citizens, but has not succeeded, which I am glad [of] as he wd certainly make a mischievous use of it. He is treated here wth the contempt he deserves by all but the P: of W: and his set. The French people of fashion just speak to him, but with apparent coldness.

To her Sister

I can not help being so uncharitable as to wish those who envy the present exertions of the French to feel a few of the comfortable effects of them. A little taste of such a situation I fancy would make them very loyal. Did I tell you that Mr. Yorke and Lady Elizabeth with some others went from Margate to Paris to see the humours of the times? I have not heard whether they are come back or how they liked it,

> but it was a more desperate step than going to see a Riote at Brentford. Had William[1] conceived his wise wish after the power had got into the hands of the fish women at Paris, one cou'd not but have approv'd it, for certainly under their direction all must succeed happily. I do not suppose such a situation as the French are in can be paralleled in history. I pity the King excessively. But I know not how a french man can shew his face after seeing how they have all been frighted and bullied by a Mob of fish women. Had the Government there undergone a Revolution in a rational and expeditious manner the example might have given rise to great disturbances here, but I trust what they have suffer'd, and most probably have still to suffer, will serve as warning rather than as a spur to imitation. . . . The sailors at Shields and Sunderland will not allow any collier ships to sail till the shipowners promise a permanent increase of their wages. . . . I hope the fish women, who seem the most dangerous rebels, will not join them.

Quaintly as it reads in the light of later events, Mrs. Montagu's idea of a "rational and expeditious Revolution" was shared by many in England at this time.

The story of the march of the fishwomen on Versailles on this fifth of October, to which Mrs. Montagu's letters constantly recur, and on which indeed we were all brought up, is now amongst the many exploded myths of the Revolution. The harridans who invaded the palace, when they were not men in petticoats, were recruited by the Orleanist conspirators rather from the purlieus of the Palais Royal than the Halles; and the genuine "Ladies of the Market," as Mrs. Webster has pointed out, expressly dissociated themselves from the "horrible calumny" by petition to the Commune next morning.

Frances Reynolds, Sir Joshua's sister and Fanny Burney's aversion, who is accused of painting pictures which made everybody laugh and her brother cry, was also, it seems, among the novelists.

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[1] Her brother.

From Miss Frances Reynolds

Kew, *Feby 4th.*

Dear Madam—You must have wonderd what was become of the Book a certain Person was in such a violent hurry to publish two months ago ! and may have some curiosity to hear.

Soon after my last I sent the whole impression to Mr. Nurse in the Strand, with an anonymous note requesting him to publish it as soon as it was convenient and to advertise it in 2 of the Papers a few days previous to its publication. The advertisement which I enclosed I depended would ensure the work a most cordial reception from the Bookseller, but to my great surprise after waiting near a fortnight in expectation of seeing it advertised, to a second note in which I desired he would return me a written answer, he sent me a verbal one, in these words " That he did not understand anything of the matter, he supposed the gentleman meant his Brother, but he was dead " ; this my servant said he repeated two or three times, and nothing more, but this was sufficient to let me see that he declined the publishing the work, and this I attributed to his having entertaind a suspicion that the Anonymous Author had no right to the honour of the name mentiond in the Advertisement, and that the extraordinary precaution used to conceal *him*, the strange distance at which the Printer lived, the date 85 etc etc strongly corroborated the suspicion. unhappily too the person I was obliged to employ in a message, to desire an explanation of his incoherent answer carried in his appearance, a confirmation as strong as proofs of holy Writ, that Mr. Anonymous, whom they took him to be, was an Impostor. not that poor Mr. Northcote has any bad look, very far from it, but he looks as if study *had worn him to the bones.* Mr. Nurse recommended him to a Mr. Bladen in Paternoster Row. I was shockd with the proposal from Mr. Northcote, it seems such an incongruity that your name should come forth from such a row I imagine of inferior Booksellers. I desired him once more to take the Book under his protection (they were at first brought to him from the printers) till I came to town, which I was in hopes I should have done before this, but a severe cold attended with an asthma will not permit me to remove for some time. I writ to Mr. Northcote about a fortnight since to desire he would find a Bookseller to take the Book in his Neighbourhood, and a Mr. Faulder in new Bond street is willing to dispose of them at 18d, but I think it disgraceful incongruous, as I said, with the honour of your name. I am determined not to sell it for less than 2/s but Mr. Northcote is to do nothing more in the affair till I return to town. indeed I relinquish all thoughts of publishing it this season.

I hope my Dear Madam you enjoy your health and I remain with the greatest Respect Your obliged and Obedient Humble Servant FRAN^{S} REYNOLDS.

Miss Reynolds painted portraits of Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Montagu, Beattie, and other friends.

James Northcote, portrait-painter and author, worked as assistant in Sir Joshua's studio and afterwards published a Memoir of his chief. This letter and the "disgraceful incongruous" of selling a book dedicated to Mrs. Montagu for 18d.—2s. being her proper value—gives one a delightful glimpse of the lady who was Dr. Johnson's "dearest dear," his "Renny," his "love." She had written in 1781 an *Essay on Taste*, which was privately printed but never published, and which the Doctor declared to have "such depth of penetration, such nicety of observation as Locke or Pascal might be proud of"; and had apparently sent him another of her productions in the following year, which the naughty old flatterer pronounced "full of penetrating meditation and very forcible sentiments," but "the mental fabric exceedingly obscure." "I would make it produce something if I could, but I have indeed no hope. If a bookseller would buy it at all . . . he would give nothing for it worth your acceptance." The Doctor's prognostications were probably truer than his praise.

In June William Wilberforce, whose friendship with Matthew Montagu has already been referred to, had made a suggestion that he should join him in a political visit to Paris, the object of which is explained in the following letter of the latter to his aunt:

From Matthew Montagu

July 1789.

My friend Wilberforce has just been making a proposal, in which he is so earnest (threatening to write to you if I will not) that I cannot give him a refusal, till I have communicated it to you.

You shall hear the state of the case, and will then be best able to judge what I ought to determine. The principal argument against the Abolition of the Slave Trade is the danger of throwing into the hands of other powers what you are about to relinquish, and by that means transferring the advantage without destroying the practice. Upon this head Mr. Pitt and Wilberforce you may remember threw out with some degree of confidence that they had reason to believe that the Abolition might be extended to other states. In order to affect this purpose Wilberforce is going to Paris, to negotiate with the french Government on the part of this country. The French Minister has personally pledged himself to favor the Abolition ; many of the leading persons are strongly inclined to it, and the King of France has himself expressed a favorable opinion on the subject. The object is a very great one ; I need not say how laudable, or with what comfort any person might thro' this whole life look back to having been instrumental in it. Wilberforce is very little conversant with the French language and is desirous to have some assistance in that respect, and is otherwise from motives of inclination and friendship very urgent with me to accompany him upon this occasion. You will immediately see how far the entering into this business in such a manner would be desirable, as engaging me more deeply and confidentially in the subject : and at the same time giving a further occasion to cement that friendship which I allready consider as one of the most fortunate circumstances of a very fortunate life. . . . He proposes to go as soon as he can be released from the House of Commons and to settle in the *neighbourhood* of Paris, and there to live as quietly as is consistent with the great business, which is the object of his most constant pursuit at present, the great scheme of the Abolition, which if it could be extended to other countries would lose its principal difficulties at home.

Mrs. Montagu gladly, though not enthusiastically, assented to the Paris scheme and offered all necessary drafts on Mr. Hoare's shop, though Wilberforce's letter to her to urge the proposition was evidently by no means tactful:

> I had the most extraordinary letter from Mr. Wilberforce to sollicit my assent to your going abroad. He addresses me as he would the most morose selfish tyrannical being that ever existed. Pray has he any cross selfish old aunt? Or does he draw his opinion from books? He intimates that you have made many sacrifices of pleasure and improvement to oblige me.

Mrs. Montagu saw no reason for Abolition of Slavery propaganda being extended to the inclusion of adopted nephews, but Wilberforce's tremendous sincerity soon atoned for this shocking gaucherie. Indeed, he spent a whole long day in her company this year, and recorded his admiration of her many and amiable qualities.

Matthew Montagu had doubtless some political ambitions, of which Wraxall speaks with rather acrid disparagement. "It was of him that General Montagu Mathew, brother to the Earl of Landaff, said in the last house of commons (upon some mistakes arising relative to their identity) 'I wish it to be understood that there is no more likeness between Montagu Mathew and Matthew Montagu than between a chestnut horse and a horse chestnut.' . . . At the feet of his aunt the celebrated Mrs. Montagu who so long occupied the first place among the *gens de lettres* in London, he was brought up; a school more adapted to form a man of taste and improvement than a statesman or a man of the world." Wraxall goes on to describe his delivery of a panegyric on the resplendent public services of Pitt, who was sitting just below him, and suggests that this might have formed no bad foundation for an English peerage, but that these efforts, though occasionally repeated, failed of success. Wraxall's *Memoirs*, valuable as they are, were notoriously bitter and biassed. Whether true in this instance or not, it is clear from the letters of this period that the young man was taking his politics and himself very seriously, and felt it injudicious to leave the House at dinner hour for more than " a plate of soup, and a woodcock roasted while he supped it," at Montagu House.

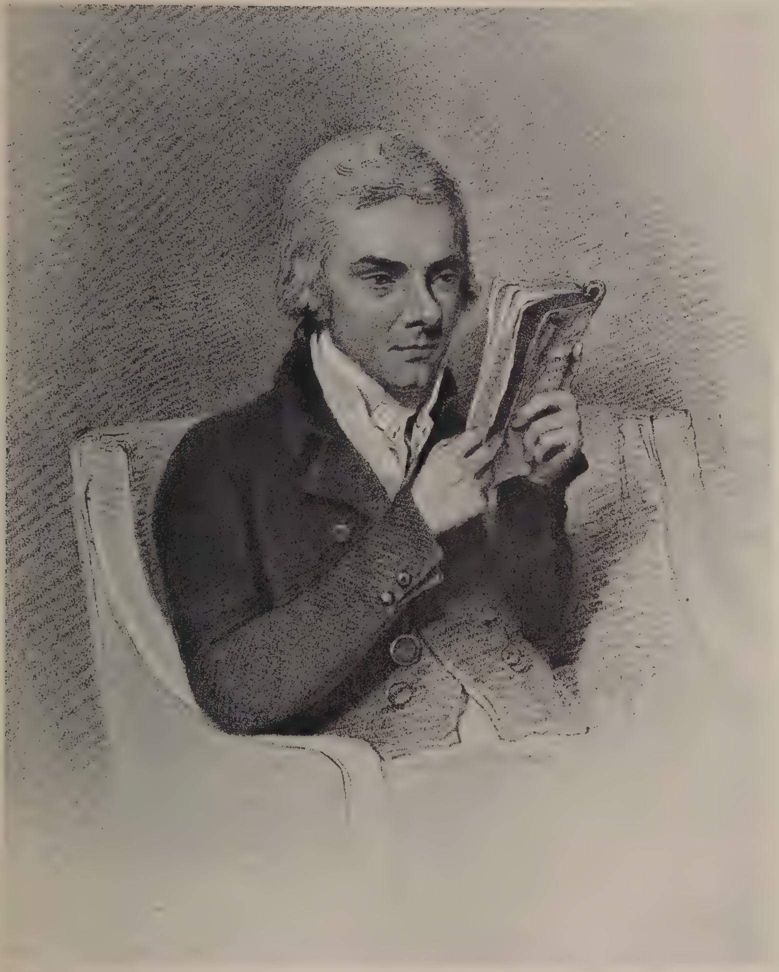
With sly smiling humour his aunt wrote to him :

> I assure you I was not at all offended, tho a little surprized, at some expressions of Mr. Wilberforce's ; I know he can never write speak, or act, but from good suggestions, and I attributed his supposition, that you had often sacrificed opportunities of improvement and pleasure to regard to me, to have arisen from having seen some Maiden Aunt of his afraid Miss Wilberforce shd go to a ball on account of the danger she apprehended from the behaviour of *forward Misses and impudent young fellows* and perhaps, averse to her going to Church where the Parson was suspected of having had an intrigue (when a young Curate) with the Clerks Daughter. As I am perfectly of opinion that to go through the World well one shd be both merry and wise, I was equally pleased when an opportunity offerd for your dancing at a Ball, or attending a learned lecture, a disposition to innocent pleasures is rather to be indulged than discouraged, tho the Budge Doctors of the Stoick Fur may preach a contrary doctrine.

Here is a further extract, dated from Manchester Square, July 13 :

From Matthew Montagu

> On Saturday evening I went to Mr. Robert Smith's at Hampstead : Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, the Dutchess of Gordon, Lady Charlotte and Col$^{l.}$ Lenox were there. We had a very pleasant evening, in which a little dispute concerning the Douglas cause between the Dutchess and Dundas (who had been the Advocate on the part of Mr. Douglas in Scotland) some little Politics and a great deal of laughing and good humour made up our entertainment. The Dutchess, Lady Charlotte and Mr. Lenox returned to Town ; Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas and myself slept there. Sunday morning Mr. Grenville came over, and to dinner Ld. Mulgrave, his Brother, L^{d} Mornington, Bankes, Ryder Smith of Heath and John Villiers. In the evening the greatest number of us returned



WILLIAM WILBERFORCE
After Henry Edridge

to Town. Our conversation had not much of Politics in it; after dinner we amused ourselves with reading Poetry, Johnson's edition of the Poets affording us ample scope. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Grenville both think the Revolution in France is in substance decided, and that the King has lost the time of making resistance: Mr. Pitt read a letter saying that Jefferson, the ambassador from the American States, has been principally consulted by the leading Men of the Popular Party. A very fair and remarkable retribution to the French King for the absurdity of abetting democratical principles. It is not yet decided whether the Tobacconists will detain us much longer or not with opposition to the Excise Bill, there is another business, the loan of the Est I^{n} Company, which will raise some debate perhaps before the end of this eternal Session. As to our Journey I am waiting at Wilberforces in expectation of his returning from Clapham, to converse with him about it: I fear the present state of France is too unsettled to do much good as to his great object.

This account of her nephew's week-end party at Hampstead must have evoked something of a sigh from the old Abbess of Sandleford. For here were the younger generation knocking loudly at the door. Robert Smith, the host, was the banker's son, Pitt's staunch ally and the future Lord Carrington. Henry Dundas, now member for Midlothian, was to become the first Viscount Melville. Jane, wife of the fourth Duke of Gordon, was the leading Tory salonist of Pall Mall, who managed to secure three dukes and a marquis for sons-in-law. Colonel Lennox, Lady Charlotte's bridegroom, who was to be one of them, had two months previously all but shot the Duke of York (the bullet grazed his curl) in a duel on Wimbledon Common over a point of punctilio. William Wyndham Grenville was the son of Mrs. Montagu's old friend the Gentle Shepherd, and was also to be ennobled in the following year, and later to become leader of "All the Talents"; Lord Mulgrave, also a staunch supporter of Pitt, and also on his way to a British peerage, was the commander of the *Racehorse*, under whom Nelson served as a middy. Lord Mornington was the Duke of Wellington's elder brother; Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society; and John Villiers, at this time Member for Old Sarum, became, later, third Earl of Clarendon. Young Montagu was establishing himself judiciously in the heart of the Pitt fraternity, and Wraxall's unkindly suggestion that he, too, had an eye to the possibilities of an English peerage, may not have been quite without foundation.

In the—perhaps a little belated but very obvious—conclusion of the above letter his aunt cordially concurred:

> I hope future opportunities will present themselves in which Mr. Wilberforce and you may indulge your benevolent intentions, and enjoy any scheme of pleasure, but to go into a country to partake of the horrors of a famine or mix in the confusion of civil war w^{d} be very unbecoming your prudence; and it is impossible that, in the present state of things in France, Mr. Neckar should fix his attentions on the coast of Africa. The abolition of slavery in France may give him trouble enough.

These young men must not really be allowed to take themselves too seriously!

> *Sept ye 5th.*
>
> I am pleased to find Mrs. Siddons behaviour in company made exactly the same impression on you which it did on me. There is a modest dignity in her manner which renders her very charming. I am glad she will have made her talents so profitable this summer.
>
> Letters from Paris represent all things there still in a state of confusion, indeed I have not received any since Mr. Neckar's appointment. I think he will be in the wretched case described by Mr. Pope: Truth w^{d} you teach to save a sinking land, all fear, none aid you and few understand. I have been at many agreable dinners and suppers with him and Madame at their villa near Paris before he was a Minister, sometimes the parties were Beaux esprits, sometimes persons of great rank in France, and with Ambassadors and Foreigners of the first distinction. I may truly say,
>
> I knew him in his happier hour.
> Of social pleasure ill exchanged for power.

Poor "Adored Minister" Necker would probably have endorsed Mrs. Montagu's apt quotations with a sigh from the heart.

I dined on monday at Baron Nilkens, where a French Count, just arrived, gave a horrid account of the Patriot Mob in one of the Provinces. They were wth great difficulty restraind from murdering the Son of the Duke of Fitzjames, having taken him for the Son of one of their opponents. After several hours expectation of being murther'd he was released. Madme de Bouflers, her Daughter and the French Ambassador, are to dine with me on Sunday. The D: and Duchess of Luxemburgh, and many of the fine french people are gone to Bath for the Xmas holydays. . . .

I think Lord Orford's late event offers the best consolation for having sold part of his inheritance. I should never purchase fine pictures, but had I inherited them from my ancestors with their family seat I would sooner have sold my hair to the Peruke Maker and my teeth to a Dentist. I think all one has found one should leave behind one, or its equivalent.

One is inclind to suppose Lord Orford must sometimes have felt emotions of regret for the sale of the very fine collection of pictures he inherited, but if he did they must now all be at an end, for part of Houghton lately burnt down contain'd the Gallery wherein they all hung, and he wou'd now have had no remains of them but a heap of ashes instead of the 42000L the Empress of Russia paid him. A few very fine ones remain'd and they are consumd, but the consideration of having realised the worth of the others must be a great consolation.

It is thought the Duchess of Devonshire will remain at Lisle. It is the Duke of York who is thought to be enamoured of the Duchess of R—— but it is believed she will marry Col St. Leger, for which I am very sorry, as it will much afflict her mother. The Duke of Beaufort is a very attentive guardian to the Duke of Rutland's children.

Edouard, Duc de FitzJames (born 1776), became a bit of a firebrand. "Il avait un eloquence mordant et un penchant irresistible a dire tout haut les vérités les plus gênantes." The mad third Earl of Orford (Horace Walpole's nephew) sold Sir Robert Walpole's fine collection of pictures at Houghton in 1779 to the Empress of Russia for just over £40,000. Horace Walpole wrote this December, reporting the fire : " As the gallery is burnt, the glorious pictures have escaped, or are reserved to be consumed on the first revolution at Petersburgh." This might very well have been prophetic.

Well do I remember my enjoyment on coming upon that wonderful series of the Houghton Van Dycks and Wharton portraits in the Petersburg Ermitage Gallery in 1902.

Charles, fourth Duke of Rutland, had died during his Irish Lord-Lieutenancy in 1787, when he was only thirty-three, leaving five children, of whom the eldest was only eleven. Their mother was the Duke of Beaufort's youngest daughter.

1790

DECORATING MONTAGU HOUSE—"CONSTITUTION BUILDING"—BURKE'S *REFLECTIONS*

Advancing age. Decorating the Portman Square house. Matthew Robinson on the French Revolution. Letter from William Locke. Lord Hardwicke's death. Letter from Lord Erskine. Birth of Marquis of Hartington. Fête of July 14. English Republicans. A launch at Deptford. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution.* Lady Anne Lindsay. Bruce's book of Travel. Tar-making. L'Abbé Foulon. Duc de Castries' hotel. Les Poissardes.

So far as can be gathered from the correspondence of this year, Mrs. Montagu did not go farther from London than Sandleford, after her return to Montagu House from Bath in the previous December. She was now in her seventieth year, was suffering a good deal from eye-strain, and was somewhat reluctantly facing the fact that " she had arrived at an age when she must look back on her past life with more pleasure perhaps than to future expectations." Montagu undertook the business visits to the Northumberland collieries and the management of the farms ; and his aunt was content to occupy her energies with the decoration of the great room at Portman Square, with its celebrated feather tapestries, its great verd-antique pillars, its Angelica Kauffmann ceiling, its Bonomi sculpture, and its Rebecca doorway-panellings in chiaroscuro.

Montagu took his friend Thomas Ryder to inspect and report :

Mr. Ryder met us by appointment in Portman Square. As I have much experience of his taste I thought he would be a good counsellor : He was much struck with the whole of the ceiling which he said he prefer'd to any he had seen ; and with us could not cease his admiration of the chiaro oscuro pictures of Rebecca : They are indeed exquisitely done and much surpass what they are meant to imitate : I afterwards called on Rebecca and saw designs for the pictures over the doors : They also are beyond my expectation both in composition and effect. He is a wonderful master of light and shade, and draws very finely. He asks eighty guineas for the four pictures over the doors ; It is a larger price in proportion than the others, but as they approach nearer the eye, they must be finished in a quite different manner ; He promises to make them resemble basso relievos in white Marble.

Biagio Rebecca, A.R.A., is chiefly remembered for his decorative work. Ryder and William Blake were both pupils of James Basire. Mrs. Montagu was also pleased, but impatient :

I was very well pleased to find the Pillars of my great room appear in just proportion to the dimensions of the Room, before they were placed up I was afraid they wd have been too thick, for so they appeared while lying on a table, but all people who have seen are delighted with them. As things of these kinds are tedious in their process, my House is full of Carvers, Gilders, Carpenters etc, which is certainly no very agreable circumstance, and I fear all will not be compleated before the middle of February. As I pay the workmen as fast as they proceed, one should think they wd be more expeditious. I flatter myself you will think my room very elegant.

From her brother Matthew Robinson, who was perhaps a little imbued with Dr. Price's benevolent altruism, French events now evoked a letter :

When I hear of the murders and massacres of Paris, my first wish is ; that such a wonderful revolution and tending in all appearance so much to the happiness of our species could happen without bloodshed. It next occurs to me : that the number of people destroy'd on the occasion does truly told perhaps hardly amount to two hundred ; although these are much too many. I turn then my thoughts to another quarter of the World ; where it is said, that there are by land and sea a million of men in arms perishing themselves and destroying one another by thousands, tens of thousands or perhaps hundreds of thousands, and laying waste withal some of the finest parts of our globe at the command and pleasure of four people, of one living at Constantinople, of another at Petersburg, of a third in Sweden and a fourth at Vienna ; the object of which four persons in making all this mischief is to acquire more territory and dominions, when what they already possess nearly equals in extent the whole of Europe. These things never the less seem to pass with some persons, as matters of course and less heinous than the affairs of France. It is certainly very savage to bear about for four or five hours stuck on poles two or three heads after being cut off ; but I remember to have seen for forty or fifty years together the same sight on Temple Bar, until time, tired of the object brought them down. It seems to me therefore that some people keep and use very different weights and measures for like events and circumstances. I believe however, that you begin much rather to wish that I would finish my letter than to trespass upon you any further with such perverse and cynical reflections.

Revolutions notwithstanding, William Locke the collector was still greatly exercised about the uses of ornament and the confines of the sublime :

Golden Square 16 *March.*

I waited on you on Sunday to return your very lively and ingenious letter, & talk it over with you. I now send it because I despair of finding, for some days to come, an hour to return to Portman Sq^{re}—Your general idea of ornament appears to me just ; and your answer to his Lordship's question *whether every ornament should not seem to be of some use*, contains a principle which I hope he has been wise enough to adopt. For it certainly is not necessary that an ornament shou'd seem to be of any use, *if it be of such a sort as brings with it a train of ideas superior to ordinary convenience.*—

I have not had a moment to look into Mr. Alison's work to see whether he coincides with you in opinion : nor to read what he says upon sublime objects, the subject of that conversation which led to the communication of your elegant letter—My idea of them is contained in the following little extracts from one of Mr. Gilpin Tours, into which he did me the honour of transcribing it from a letter of mine written to him sometime since on the subject of Sublimity. But this compliment, as I did not wish my name to appear, I beg may remain entre nous—You will see that my agreeing with you in what you said on the subject was not the effect of Civility. . . .

We must leave Mr. Gilpin in possession of the extracts.

From Matthew Montagu

MONTAGU FARM, *May.*

The late Lord H[ardwicke] was only taken ill on Friday Evening, and the family were in no apprehension of his danger till the Saturday Morning, when he seem'd to have convulsive Motions, owing to a general failure of circulation. Mr. John Yorke called upon him and was not known to Lord H.; he asked who he was, and upon hearing his name gave no signs of recollection, but complained of his being deserted, and expressed his surprize and indignation that no person wd assist him. Indeed nothing could be then administer'd to his relief. He died only on Sunday Morning, and has left all his ready Money, amounting to 160,000£ to his Daughters and their Children. The Hardwicke Estate alone devolves to Mrs. Yorke, contrary to the general expectation, as it was thought that a large Sum of Money wd go to the *name* of Yorke. The present Earl will have about 13,000 Pr Ann to spend, which is much more than is necessary for happiness, and equal to every purpose of vanity.

Philip Yorke, the second Earl of Hardwicke, was, as we have seen and as his father had been, a constant friend and correspondent of Mrs. Montagu's.

From Lord Erskine

May 1st.

I am very sorry indeed that you should have been troubled at all upon the subject of Lever's action, as it never was my intention that you should know anything about it; His attorney applied to me at a time when there was no prospect that the act would take place, & as the Court of King's Bench seemed to throw out that the other was a favourable compromise, I thought that the action brought by Lever would be well quieted on the same terms. His right to recover at all might have been *perhaps* questioned ; but besides that the inclusion of various transactions in one declaration for the purpose of avoiding many penalties by one composition is at all times hazardous when brought into the view of a Court, I wished to avoid if possible all use of your name in the Courts on the subject. for tho the transaction on which the suit proceeded was perfectly innocent and Honourable on your part, yet my regard for you & the high esteem in which I hold your name and character made me wish to keep you at a distance from all public controversy, & I meant that you should not even have been disturbed with thinking again about Westminster Hall or the vagabonds that infest it.

I assure you it never could occur to me to consider you as an ordinary Client but as a friend, & indeed I always reflect with pleasure that the person who is to represent me hereafter bears a name which is a badge of that friendship.

Lever's action related to the giving of premiums contrary to Act of Parliament to coal-buyers.

Thomas, first Baron Erskine, the famous Chancellor, friend of Sheridan and Fox, the foe of Pitt, the defender of Lord George Gordon, of Stockdale, and of Thomas Paine, was at this time Attorney-General to the Prince of Wales. His son, David Montagu, was our lady's godson.

William Spencer, afterwards sixth Duke of Devonshire, was born on May 21.

June the 6th.

I am glad the Duchess of Devonshire has brought a Marquiss of Hartington into the World, as it will be great joy to the Dowager Lady Spencer ; I suppose you have heard that it was with great difficulty her Grace was allowd to stay at Brussels till Lady Spencer arrived. The Duchess was put to bed, and it was pretended that she was in labour, yet even that plea was but just able to suspend the search of the House, and turning the family out of the Town ; at last the favour was obtaind to allow them to wait till Lady Spencer arrived, on promise they wd then depart immediately, which they did. It seems some letters of her Graces were intercepted in which there were political offences, what business she had to meddle in the affairs of the Brabantines I cannot imagine. . . .

Monsr de la Fayette seems to be Dictator of France.

July.

Montagu was at the Drawing Room yesterday; their Majesties thank God are in good health, and their Subjects I hope will keep in true loyalty, in spite of Ld Stanhope, Alderman Sawbridge, and Dr. Price. I suppose you have read the account of their speeches the 14th of this month. That intoxication might not excite disorder there was not to be anything to eat or drink on the Champs de Mars on that day, but yet I do not envy Mr. Capel late D: of Orleans the days diversion. Two days ago we met Madme de Buffons in a Coach and 6 with 3 Postillions on her road to Dover.

Your hopes of my being the toast of Spitalfields I think well founded, for while the Misses wear nothing but muslin, the old Dowager, who dresses her rooms in silk, ought with them to be esteemed la belle des Belles.

Mrs. Montagu had written to her sister: "I am going to the City end of the town this morning to bespeak 280 yards of white Sattin for the window curtains of my great house, and about 200 for the hangings. I think this order will make me very popular in Spittal Fields. I am also to have a very large quantity of white lutestring for the Octagon drawing room at Sandleford." Lutestring was a heavy lustrous silk material. Madame Buffon was the Duc d'Orleans' mistress, now on her way back to join him in Paris. She it was who, with some Englishmen, was seated with him at dinner two years later "when savage howls of triumph attracted his attention. Walking to the window he looked out calmly on the scene, contemplated with a perfectly unmoved countenance the dead white face, the fair curls fluttering round the pike head and without a word returned to his place at the table." The head was that of the heroic Princesse de Lamballe, who had just been atrociously murdered. A few minutes before it had been paraded before the window of the imprisoned Marie Antoinette.

I hope you will consider me rather as a busy than an ungratefull Woman, when I tell you, Messrs Bonomi, Bartoli, Prichard, Evans and Black have all been with me this morning. No Minister has a greater Levée than a Builder of Houses; but he can satisfy them all with sweet words and fine promises, and on this they will obey his orders. When they have executed mine I must pay in pounds sterling. However as I stand well in Mr. Hoare's good books, I have been bespeaking Pillars of Scagliola in vert antique, and pressing forward the compleating my great Room. Mr. Jerningham had not heard from his Brother, but a Courier from the D. of Devonshire this morning brings word, they were obliged to fly from Brussels to Lisle, and from thence they will go to Calais, and so onto their native Land the first fair wind. Brussels is certainly under the dominion of The Patriots, but it is thought the Emperor, in the Spring, will attack all his Revolted Countries with his whole Army so he will then behave like a Turk to the Christians, and like a Christian to the Turks. The report of an Insurrection at Paris is believed to be false.

Dr. Price had already made his extreme democratic views public during the American War. Lord Stanhope (who, as we have noted, had married William Pitt's sister) was all but a Republican, and Chairman of the Revolution Society in London; John Sawbridge, who had been Lord Mayor in 1775, was founder of the Bill of Rights Society.

The Revolution Society met at the London Tavern on November 9 and sent an address of congratulation to the French National Assembly after hearing a sermon by Dr. Price which later furnished Burke's text for his *Reflections on the French Revolution*. The sermon and the Society having achieved wide notoriety, they celebrated the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille on this July 14 by a further meeting, at which Price apostrophised the French Revolutionists as " Heavenly Philanthropists."

But the movement, thanks partly to its association with the Prince of Wales's party and the opposition, but much more to the innate British dislike of schemes of class hatred, made no great headway, and d'Orleans's imported seed fell on stony ground. The Duc in fact was in many respects, as Mrs. Webster has pointed out, our Prince of Wales's Paris parallel. Both were prodigal renegades to their sovereigns, both were drunkards and libertines, both played into the hands of, and were backed by, the extremists of opposition and faction.

July.

Mr. Montagu having dined yesterday with Mr. Secretary Grenville, heard a full account of the Fête on les Champs de Mars, which happily the fierce God of War did not celebrate in his usual bloody character ; all was tranquill, and joyous. This will give spirit to the National Assembly but . . . I should rather expect well from the French in ordering a Fête, than modelling a Constitution of Government.

I suppose the quiet celebrations of the Fête of the National Assembly will give spirit to the oratory of Lord Stanhope, force to the motions of Alderman Sawbridge, and make Dr. Price more fiercely cock his National Cockade.

Sawbridge, stern Republican in principles, and almost hideous in his aspect, was now M.P. for the City. Richard Price was Franklin's intimate friend.

SHOOTERS HILL, *Aug. 2d.*

On Tuesday My young Friends carried me to Deptford to see the launch of a 90 Gun Ship. The whole of the spectacle was magnificient, and sublime ; We were seated on the shore of the River in Lord Chatham's booth, so without croud or heat we contemplated the noble scene of Commercial Vessels continual passing and this mighty Ship coming forth as their Protector with 90 Guns in her sides, and 900 Men in her bowels. Many thousand spectators added splendor to the Shew. Lord Belgrave, one of the Lords of the Admiralty came home and dined with me. . . .

I suppose you have heard of the violent insurrections at Lyons ; confusion and terror reign there, and no works but such as are done by the hand of rapine and violence go forward. The silk weavers are driven from their Loom, and the destinies only *weave the woof and weave the warp.*

Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, published this summer, naturally formed a leading topic in the correspondence of the time:

> I hope before this time you are in full possession of Mr. Burkes admirable, excellent, incomparable pamphlet. I think it will do great service here in preventing confusion and rebellion; whether it can cure the evil already done in France it is difficult to say, for shd it restore the Democrats to their senses, it cannot restore life to the murderd, nor property to the plunderd, nor treat the wounds the State has received. It gives one great delight to see fine talents employd to good and great purposes, and my pleasure was heightened by my long intimacy and friendship for Mr. Burke.
>
> If to his share some party frailties fall,
> Read but his book and you'll forget them all.

Burke, who had utterly lost his head over the Regency debates, more than regained his reputation by this wonderful tract.

> I am very glad to find my opinion of Mr. Burkes pamphlet confirm'd by yours; He has the Fate of great geniuses to be always much in the right, or much in the wrong; if reason and justice directed their strong energies one should hardly be able to forbear envying them, as things are, one only admires and wonders. I really hope, and indeed believe, his work will be of great service to this Country by preserving us from innovations in our Government; to restore the French to any degree of order is now perhaps beyond human power. After twice reading Mr. Burkes work I have now begun Mr. Calonnes; they agree in many points. . . .
>
> I was much pleased to find people of all parties, of all ages, and of all humours here united in approbation and praise of Mr. Burkes work; I do not doubt but it will prevent mischief in England; whether it can remedy what is already done in France is doubtfull, but if a good translation of it is made I think it will have great effect there. Madame de Boufler is enchanted with it, she read to me some letters she had just received from Paris, one of them mentions that a laquais of the Dss of Boufler was murderd just under her window, and many disasters of the like kind there and in the Provinces.

Amélie, daughter-in-law of the Comtesse de Boufflers, had been one of Mrs. Montagu's hosts in Paris in 1776.

To Mrs. Carter she adds, in November, some second thoughts :

> I agree entirely with you in opinion of Mr. Burke's work and of his character ; the errors of his conduct have arisen from the impetuosity of his passions, not from want of good dispositions or from malignant intentions ; the faults of his book are occasioned by a genius too strong to be restrained by reason and an eloquence too rapid for discretion. . . . I hear our King is much pleased with Mr. Burke's book.

Fanny Burney wrote to Mrs. Waddington in November :

> I own myself entirely of Mrs. Montagu's opinion about Mr. Burke's book ; it is the noblest deepest most animated and exalted work that I think I have ever read. I am charmed to hear its *éloge* from Mrs. Montagu ; it is a tribute to its excellence which reflects high honour on her own candour, as she was one of those the most vehemently irritated against its author but a short time since. [*Diary*, iv. 435.]
>
> I hear Lady Ann Lyndsay is going to be married to Mr. Wyndham, the Member for Norwich, the excentric Mr. Wyndham. His choice suits that character. S^r^ Horace Mann is thought to have been long attach'd to L^y^ Margaret ; as she is now at liberty they may go to Hymens Altar together, if the Knight is so disposed, but perhaps he likes no matches but cricket matches.

These were bad shots of the gossipers. Lady Anne, having achieved immortality by one homely ballad, "Auld Robin Gray," and refused many lovers, married Andrew Barnard, who, as Macartney's colonial secretary, carried her off to the Cape. It was not till thirty years later that she admitted the maternity of Robin Gray to Sir Walter Scott, and then she must needs try to spoil the perfect thing by a " continuation." Her sister Margaret had married Alexander Fordyce, the banking plunger whose failure for over £100,000 had caused such consternation in 1772. Walpole says he was credited with having made £30,000 by stock jobbing over the false report of Howe's victory over Washington in 1777. He died in 1789, and Lady Margaret, widow of the "infamous rascal who had shook the mighty credit of Great Britain," received a pension from its King. She did not, however, marry Sir Horatio Mann, the fond nephew of Horace Walpole's old Florence correspondent, and the staunch patron of the Hambledon cricketers, he preferring Lucy Noel, Lord Gainsborough's daughter.

James Bruce's five volumes of *Travel to discover the Sources of the Nile* was another much-discussed publication of this year; but Mrs. Montagu thought them rather a prolix account of a rather useless adventure:

> I should have sympathised more with Mr. Bruce's distresses if the scheme which brought him into them had had some more noble view, and beneficient object; but of what use is this discovery of the source of the Nile? I have a due respect for this River of old and long establish'd fame, and power, but it derives little of its consequence from its source; it owes its greatness to other causes. I may be interested to know by what means a great Man, Son of a mean one, acquired wealth and importance, but I dont wish to see his mean Parents picture. I do not wonder you were so shockd at the account you had heard of the cruel banquet as not to read the particulars, but I fear that the dishes seasond with sugar, and west Indian spices, served at our tables, cause more misery to men than these banquets in Abyssinia to the Beasts.

Wilberforce's day with Mrs. Montagu was bearing fruit.

To Montagu superintending affairs at Denton she writes:

> *Oct. the 20th.*
>
> I shall be much obliged if you will at some convenient opportunity give for me to old Brown 2 guineas for his unfortunate son John. Pray enquire how the Tar Manufactory goes on, and if they know how to make the Sal ammoniac of the liquor.
>
> Your description of Rokeby makes me more than ever hate Sr Thomas Robinson; if I shd hereafter meet him on

the banks of Styx before I have taken a draught of Lethe I shall give him a bitter reproof.

"Long" Sir Thomas was so called to distinguish him from another Sir Thomas who was short and fat, and afterwards became Lord Grantham ; Lady Townshend said there was little difference really, for one was as broad as the other was long. Our Sir Thomas of Ranelagh sold Rokeby, which had been in the family for 160 years, to Saurey Morritt, father of Sir Walter Scott's friend. *Hinc illae lachyrmae.*

To Mrs. Carter

Dec. 20th.

Mr. and Mrs. Burke, who dined with me on saturday, brought with them l'abbé de Foulon, whose Father's head was hack'd off by the mob, and his heart carryd in a bowl of blood through the streets by the Bourgeoises of Paris, who sang le refrain of an old french Chanson *point de Fête sans Cœur*, this was not done by les Poissardes, but by the Wives of Shopkeepers. What a wicked strange creature is the human Animal when unrestrained by religion, and laws ! You may imagine impressions of grief and terror appear strongly in the Countenance of l'abbé de Foulon. He has brought to England with him the Children of Mr. Berthier his Brother in Law, who was murtherd at the same time as his Father was, and much in the same manner. A Lady has lent me the proceedings at le Chatelet ; my eyes will not allow me to look far into them, but they confirm me in my detestation of the Duke of Orleans, and Mirabeau, and do not reconcile me to Mr. de la Fayette.

A gentleman just returned from Paris told me this morning, that to avail themselves to the utmost of the liberty of the press, they are printing the most horrid blasphemy, and obscenity, every day.

About 600 families of rank have left Paris since the House of the Duc de Castries was destroy'd.

Poor old Joseph François Foulon, grown grey in the service of his country, was amongst the earliest victims of 1789. A week after the siege of the

Bastille he was arrested at Viry, dragged to Paris, tortured with the vilest ferocity in spite of Lafayette's protests, and hanged at the Lanterne. When his head was struck off it was paraded on a pike, the mouth stuffed with hay, it having been put about that when one of his financial schemes was objected to with the question "What will the people do?" he had replied that if they had no bread they could eat hay. The story was a lie, trumped up for the occasion; but such lies stick; and Carlyle, accepting the legend on the more than dubious authority of the *Deux Amis*, writes him down as a scoundrel of unmeasured wealth, extortioner, plotter, liar, Old Infamy, and so on.

His son-in-law Berthier, arrested in Compiègne at the same time, arrived in Paris that evening, escorted by a mob of armed brigands, placards brandished round his carriage accusing him as thief, tyrant, traitor. He too was swept away from the Hôtel de Ville to the Lanterne, but sabred before it could be reached, and his body hacked to pieces.

The *Procédure du Châtelet* which Mrs. Montagu had been reading was a volume of 570 pages recording the evidence given at the great inquiry held there into the events of October 5 and 6, 1789, and the march to Versailles. A very large number of witnesses was examined, and the evidence of an instigating Orleanist conspiracy was overwhelming, whilst the actual presence of the Duc amongst the mob at the Palace was testified by half-a-dozen witnesses. The Châtelet magistrates convicted both the Duc d'Orleans and Mirabeau for arrest, but the latter cowed the Assembly into reversing this judgement.

The young Duc de Castries' Hôtel in the Rue de Varennes was pillaged (Nov. 13, 1790) and its whole contents hurled into the street, because he had wounded Charles Lameth, the Jacobin deputy, in a duel to which the latter had challenged him. He had fought in the American War, and was now, as an *émigré*, to take up arms against the Revolutionaries.

To her Sister

A little while ago there went from Paris to Lyons Mesdames les Poissardes, their Queen Royally apparell'd, they were met 4 miles from the City by the Magistrates, and many of le Tiers état, were magnificently feasted in a publick Hall, and the Town was at night most splendidly illuminated. This account was sent by an English Lady at Lyons. Perhaps you do not wish to hear of the Billingsgate Ladies being received at Norwich in like manner. The Women in a late Mob at Nimes behaved in a shocking manner. Amongst many Persons murderd were two of high Rank, the bodies of whom the Women cut into slices.

The Poissardes of the Halles had always been privileged to go to Versailles on royal occasions and *le jour de l'an*, when they were royally feasted.

1791

ROYALTIES AT MONTAGU HOUSE—FANNY BURNEY FREE —THE DUC D'ORLEANS

A Storm. Duchesse de Biron. The Nabob and the Campbells. Fanny Burney's release. Her tour and visit to Sandleford. Feather Room at Portman Square. Visit of the Queen. Cowper on the Feather Hangings. The French King. Countess of Albany and Duke of Gloucester at Montagu House. July 14. The Urn of John Locke. Mr. Bowdler in France. Fanny Burney meets Mrs. Montagu at Mrs. Ord's. The Duc d'Orleans and the Gold of Pitt.

To her Sister

Jany. 7th.

The storm, of which the news papers have given some account, was too sublime and terrible for even the pen of a Poet to describe. My House resisted it well except in the frail part of glass. the west of my bow window in my bed chamber had 4 panes shatterd, one pane was so struck by lightening or wind, that the glass was driven through the division of the shutters ; some fell into my room, and the House maids, who sleep in the room over my head, had a large shower of glass thrown upon them as they lay in bed, and the frame of one of their windows was shatterd to pieces ; the tops of the Lamps at my Western gate were carried to a great distance. My servants were many of them much frighten'd, but our alarms were nothing compared to those whose chimneys fell, and whose Houses shook with the wind.

The Duchess of Biron, having had an apple thrown at her head by the mob at the Opera at Paris, thought it best to return to England ; she and Mdme de Cambise dined with me the day before yesterday.

Walpole wrote : " A song applicable to the Queen being encored as a compliment, the Duchesse de Biron applauding with her fan on her box, a shower of apples flew at her, and with them a pen-knife that hardly missed her. She took it away with her and next morning sent it to Lafayette, and desired he would lay it on the altar of Liberty, and then came away."

Portman Square, *Sat. 21st* [*May* ?].

After Sr Archibald and Lady Campbell had left the East Indies the old Nabob of Arcott thought he might then shew his gratitude to them, without breaking in upon their engagement not to accept any presents ; so with a kind letter to Lady Campbell in which he says, as he used to look upon her as his Daughter, and call her such, he hoped she would now accept from him an annuity of £1500 a year for her life and had given order here for the payment of the first year immediately, but tho the Campbells were pleased with this testimony of the Nabobs satisfaction in their conduct towards him, [they] with many expressions of gratitude and respect declined the noble retribution, as appearing to them, to be not consistent with their engagements to the India Company. I love the old Nabob for his gratitude, I reverence and admire the Campbells for their delicate disinterestedness.

Pray who is the supposed Author of Hartley House ? I cannot imagine how my name travelld to Calcutta. I dare say the Author is very goodnatured, and disposed to praise even small merit.

Hartly House, *Calcutta*—a young lady's letters from India to her confidante at home—was published anonymously in Dublin, 1789 ; but I failed to find in it the allusion which evoked Mrs. Montagu's interest.

General Sir Archibald Campbell, after long service in America and India, was Governor of Madras from 1786 to 1789.

The completion and fixing in position of the feather work and other decoration in the great room at Portman Square took place in June, and made the house uninhabitable for a little while:

On Sunday last, as soon as I had attended the morning service, and heard a most excellent Sermon at Portman Square

Chapel, I set out for Shooters Hill, where I have slept every night since, but in the morning have generally gone to Portman Square for 2 or 3 hours to attend to the fixing up the feather work and some improvements in the hanging the Curtains in my great room ; much dust have I swallow'd, much heat have I suffered, in these journeys.

William Cowper, who had been a great admirer of Mrs. Montagu's *Essay*, and whose *Task* it had been to sing *The Sofa* at the behest of another lady, now dedicated his Muse to The Feather Hangings:

The Birds put off their ev'ry hue
To dress a room for Montague,
The Peacock sends his heav'nly dyes,
His *rainbows* and his *starry eyes* ;
The Pheasant, plumes which now infold
His mantling neck with downy gold ;
The Cock his arch'd tail's azure show,
And, river blanch'd, the Swan, his snow.
All tribes beside of Indian name,
That glossy shine, or vivid flame
Where rises and where sets the day,
Whate'er they boast of rich and gay,
Contribute to the gorgeous plan,
Proud to advance it all they can.

Good courtier as she ever was, the visit of the Queen and six Princesses to her great house this summer must have been felt as a fitting crown to its completion; yet the following letter contains the only reference to the royal breakfast in this collection. Others may very likely have been removed. The visit took place on June 6. Walpole says that the King was also there, but that, I think, is a mistake.

To Mrs. Carter

June.

I had hoped this morning to have had leisure to send you a full and true account of my various engagements, but I have been obliged to give up my morning, first to paying my tradesmens bills, then to doing the honours of my feather work to about 50 people. The news paper wd tell you all that is worth hearing about my breakfast on monday, The honour and the delight I received by her Majestys and the Princesses visit, no pen can describe, no paper contain. All that a great mind, and benevolent heart can inspire appears in every word the Queen speaks, and every look and gesture can express. The Princesses are beyond all description charming. The joy of the day I have lived on ever since, and the fatigue etc. of the succeeding days have not subdued my health and spirits.

The following extract from Fanny Burney's diary of the ensuing April shows that her artist cousin, Edward Burney, had assisted in the Montagu house decorations:

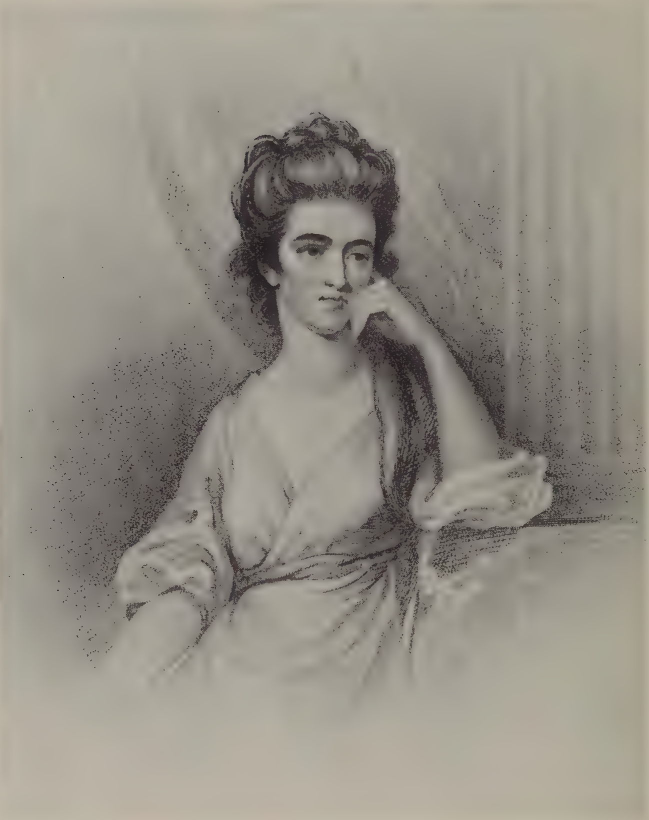
" Mrs. Montagu showed me her new room, which was a double gratification to me from the elegant paintings by our ingenious Edward. . . . 'Tis a very beautiful house indeed, and now completely finished." She adds that she met there a lady who, though " she liked her very well, was but a commonish non nothingish sort of a good humoured and sensiblish woman." When Mrs. Montagu was entertaining seven hundred guests at breakfast it could hardly be demanded that *all* her visitors should be celebrities.

To Mrs. Carter

Shooters Hill, 27 *June.*

. . . . This year the finishing and furnishing my great room has both magnified and multiplied the affair, but all wd have been done before this time if it had not been necessary to cover my feather room with a paper hanging lined with linnen to preserve it from moth and the summers dust. . . .

I am sure you feel much pity, and great apprehension, for the King and Queen of France, and the poor Dauphin ; I was delighted when I heard they had escaped from their rebellious subjects, but my joy was of short duration. I think the most sagacious cannot forsee how all this will end. Time in its course leads strange circumstances by the hand ; little did I imagine, a few years ago, that I shd place the Pretenders widow



LOUISA, COUNTESS OF ALBANY

After Ozias Humphry

beside the Duke of Gloucester at breakfast, yet this I did, par politesse, the other day, and they conversed very graciously together. You will wonder perhaps, as I never went to Gloucester House, how I obtained the honours of his Royal Highness visit, I assure you I did not obtain [it] by a presumptuous invitation, but in consequence of his intimation that he wishd to come to my breakfast. His Royal Highness behaved with great politeness and humour.

The Countess of Albany, widow of the Young Pretender, visited England with her devoted Alfieri in May 1791. She went to Court as Princess of Stolberg, and Walpole, who met her at Lady Ailesbury's, describes the interview of "the two queens." Her attempt to get some sort of pension or grant failing, she went a tour of the country, of which her Journal records her depressing impressions. After three months' stay the pair returned to Paris. It was at Dover Pier, on the way back, that Alfieri re-encountered the Penelope Pitt for whose *beaux yeux* he had fought Lord Ligonier in St. James's Park twenty years before.

It will be remarked in the foregoing letter that Mrs. Montagu, ever staunchly for the Court, "never went to Gloucester House"; and it may be remembered that the secret marriages of George III.'s two brothers—the Duke of Cumberland's to Mrs. Horton, daughter of Simon Luttrell, whom Lady Louisa Stuart summarises as "the greatest reprobate in England," and the Duke of Gloucester's to Maria, Countess of Waldegrave, the very beautiful illegitimate daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, and Horace Walpole's niece—had caused his indignant Majesty to forbid both brothers the Court, and to put both Cumberland and Gloucester House under the ban of his condign displeasure.

The menage of the two houses was, however, very different; for whilst Mrs. Horton and her sisters, "noisy, vulgar, indelicate and intrepid," had led riotous parties at Vauxhall and Ranelagh, and made Cumberland House the happy hunting-ground of the tag-rag and bobtail of the Prince of Wales's set, the Duchess of Gloucester was a model wife, in spite of her royal husband's later defection to her lovely and intriguing lady-in-waiting, Lady Almeria Carpenter; and the Duke's real respect and affection for his brother the King forbade any of the indecent caballing and satire against Buckingham House and its easily ridiculed inmates which rejoiced the heart of Betty Luttrell and her boon companions.

All the same, it is conceivable that Mrs. Montagu's state breakfast to Alfieri's mistress and to the royal protector of Lady Almeria may have made a certain lady at Deal shake her maiden curls a little dubiously.

> I did not doubt but our prudent Minister wd take every possible precaution to prevent mischief being done in London on the 14th, but as there are so many rogues in a great City, and not a few Enthusiasts, I was glad when it was past. My Sister tells me that a Methodist Preacher at Norwich took for his text that day, they shall bind their King in Chains, and their Nobles in bonds of Iron ; but the people did not endeavour to fulfill his prophecy. Dr. Priestly has been amply reward^{d} for his endeavours to introduce anarchy and confusion.

There had been much expectation of riots on the anniversary of July 14, but the whole scheme of the mischief-making party in England fizzled out, so far as London was concerned. The Revolutionary Club were refused the use both of Ranelagh and of the Opera House, and had finally to content themselves with a meeting at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand, which both Fox and Sheridan declined to attend. A few cockades were worn, and a few windows broken, at the instigation, as Walpole suggests, of the glaziers and tallow-chandlers.

Hannah More writes from Cowslip Green, August 14:

I am at this moment looking out of my little Cottage window on a very neat and elegant Urn with this simple Inscription

To John Locke
(born in this village)
this memorial is erected
by Mrs. Montagu
and presented to Hannah More.

Judge, dear Madam, of my surprise, before it had been erected three days, to see an Account of it, in the Gentleman's Magazine. I imagine that somebody who saw it in the Artificer's yard at Bath gave this premature publication. To make the little history of my Urn quite compleat your friend Mr. Anstey happened to be here on its arrival, and his taste decided on the place of its erection. I am not a little gratified by this monument to my own—I will not say pride, because that I trust something of a better feeling at least is mixed with it ; but it is a pleasure to me to look on an object that records the most honourable circumstance of my life, I mean the friendship with which I have been honoured by Mrs. Montagu.

Cowslip Green, near Blagdon, was about ten miles on the Exeter Road from Bristol. Locke's birthplace was at Wrington, a little to the north-east. The urn was subsequently moved, when the Mores changed houses, to Barley Wood, just opposite the actual birthplace of the philosopher.

Fanny Burney, released at last, ill and exhausted from her five years of penal servitude at Windsor, on July 7, after a few weeks' rest at Chelsea College had set out on a westward tour with Mrs. Ord at the end of the month, visiting Farnham, Winchester, Southampton, Stonehenge, Milton Abbey, Dorchester, Bridport, Sidmouth, Exeter, Glastonbury, Wells, and Bath, where they remained for a fortnight, and Fanny was introduced to the Duchess of Devonshire. On their return journey they spent Sunday with Mrs. Montagu at Sandleford. "She lives," Miss Burney's Journal records, "but a few miles from Dunstan Park [where she was with Mrs. Waddington, *née*

Marianne Port, Mrs. Delany's great-niece] and sent over to invite us. We found no company but Mrs. Matthew [Montagu], who continues as much a favourite with me as ever, and her four noble little children, all born since my Royal abode. We had a delightful day here, and here we left Mrs. Ord." Their hostess writes to Mrs. Carter on September 20:

> I hastend home from Nuneham two days sooner than I shd otherwise have done, in spite of the kindest and most urgent invitation to stay, and the great temptation to do so, in expectation of a visit from Mrs. Ord whom I expected at Sandleford at her return from a Tour she had been making with Miss Burney; however she stoppd two days with her [at] Mrs. Waddingtons, and then came hither. Mrs. Waddington and Miss Burney, who seems much recovered, gave me the pleasure of her company here at dinner Sunday was sennight.

Dec. 8th.

> The Parliament of Paris has registered the Kings Edicts, so he is still le grand Monarque at home, but he appears a little Sovereign in Europe. Our Royal Heir apparent will for some time be deprived of his French Master in Polissonneries, for the D: of Orleans cannot prevail on his Master to restore him to the Liberty of returning to Paris; less still will he obtain leave to visit England, where he is supposed to have caught the love of liberty. The French King, who in his anger makes use of vulgar phrases calld the D: of Orleans an english Dog, to which he replied, an english Dog had more liberty than a french Prince. . . .
>
> Mr. Bowdler [writing from Paris] says in Normandy all was anxiety and distress, but all was quiet. All the Members of the Parlt of Rouen in number 120 ordered not to sleep out of their own Houses. How wd our Senators endure this who cannot rest in their own Houses? The return of the Parlt at Paris is impatiently wishd for, in the meantime a total suspension of all administration of justice. The general opinion, he says, is that the Court will give up the right of imposing any Taxes with^{t} the consent of the Nation, and another point is the appropriation of the Revenue; the 3d, the abolition of lettres de Cachet. If all this should be brought about Louis seize will be a great Sovereign, but no longer a Grand Monarque;

but without a Civil War I think it will not happen. It is for our interest he shd keep that power which renders him very terrible to his subjects, and little so to his Enemies.

Fanny Burney, who again met Mrs. Montagu at Mrs. Ord's in December, found her " in good spirits and very unaffectedly agreeable. No one was there to awaken ostentation, no new acquaintance to require any surprise from her powers. She was therefore natural and easy, as well as informing and entertaining."

The concluding sentence of Mrs. Montagu's last-quoted letter is of interest as a small sidelight on the English attitude towards the French Revolution, which may be summarised (apart, of course, from our own anarchic Jacobins) as one of complacent relief. France had her hands full, and the constantly recurring fears of war and invasion were for the time being at rest. " It must be long," wrote Lord Dorset, " before France returns to any state of existence which can make her a subject of uneasiness to other nations." That it was not to be so very long was due in part to the steps by which the revolutionary leaders were forced to make aggressive use of the army and manipulate the patriotism of the country. But the phantasmal " Or de Pitt " that was constantly being heard of in Paris as supplying the backbone of mischief was, it seems (except for such contributions as may have emanated from Pitt's republican brother-in-law), a pure chimera. The Duc d'Orléans, who had many interests in London, not all of them reputable, had large sums of money in our banks from which the funds of the Orleanist leaders were in great measure provided; while the liberty of an English dog permitted him also to enjoy and employ them in the gambling and debauchery of town and the companionship of the Prince, of Fox, Sheridan, and their deep-drinking fraternity.

FANNY BURNEY AND MRS. THRALE

Dr. Johnson, Fanny Burney, and Mrs. Montagu. Letters to and from Miss Burney. Mrs. Delany and Mrs. Vesey. "Vanessa" and *Cecilia*. Mrs. Montagu on Fanny Burney. Visit to Streatham. Woodhouse. Johnson and the Thrales. Letter from Mrs. Thrale. Fanny Burney and Mrs. Thrale on Mrs. Montagu. Rivalries. Mrs. Montagu on Mrs. Thrale. The Piozzi marriage. Mrs. Montagu's verdict. Mrs. Vesey's letter. The Italian tour. The *Anecdotes* of Dr. Johnson. Boswell stung. The *Essay* and the Johnson-Boswell-Thrale-Montagu squabble. Mrs. Montagu on Mrs. Piozzi's book.

There is a great deal about Mrs. Montagu in Fanny Burney's *Diary and Letters*, beginning with the delightful account of their first introduction at Mrs. Thrale's in 1778, when Dr. Johnson, hearing of her intended visit, "began to see-saw with a countenance strongly expressive of inward fun, and after enjoying it some time in silence, he suddenly and with great animation turned to me and cried:

"Down with her, Burney! down with her!—spare her not!—attack her, fight her, and down with her at once! You are a rising wit and she is at the top . . . when I was new, to vanquish the great ones was all the delight of my poor little dear soul! So at her, Burney—at her and down with her!"

But Miss Burney did not down Mrs. Montagu; and thereafter they met constantly for a while, either at Streatham or other assemblies of mutual friends. Mrs. Montagu was duly initiated into the great secret of the authorship of *Evelina*, and told Dr. Johnson she was "proud that a work so commended should be a woman's." She said to Mrs. Thrale that "she was amazed that so delicate a girl could write so boisterous a book," and sent her love "to the truly lovely Miss Burney," by which Fanny modestly presumes she meant lovable.

But, as we shall see also in regard to Mrs. Thrale, Fanny Burney's admiration for Mrs. Montagu was qualified by various reservations, which she possibly imbibed from Mr. Crisp and her (at that time) "best loved Mrs. Thrale." "Mrs. Montagu," she wrote with considerable insight in 1781, "as we have often agreed, is a character rather to respect than to love, for she has not that *don d'aimer* by which alone love can be made fond or faithful."

In December 1785 Mrs. Montagu wrote Miss Burney a long letter, which is, one must allow, by no means in her happiest vein. Miss Barrett includes it in her edition of her aunt's letters, with a note that it is "preserved merely as a specimen of the epistolary style of so celebrated a person as the writer." Mrs. Montagu, referring to the recent death of that naughty rake Agmondesham Vesey (the Sylph's husband, Burke's friend and Johnson's club-mate), says in this effusion:

"A frippery character, like a gaudy flower, may please while it is in bloom; but it is the virtuous only that, like the aromatics, preserve their sweet and reviving odour when withered."

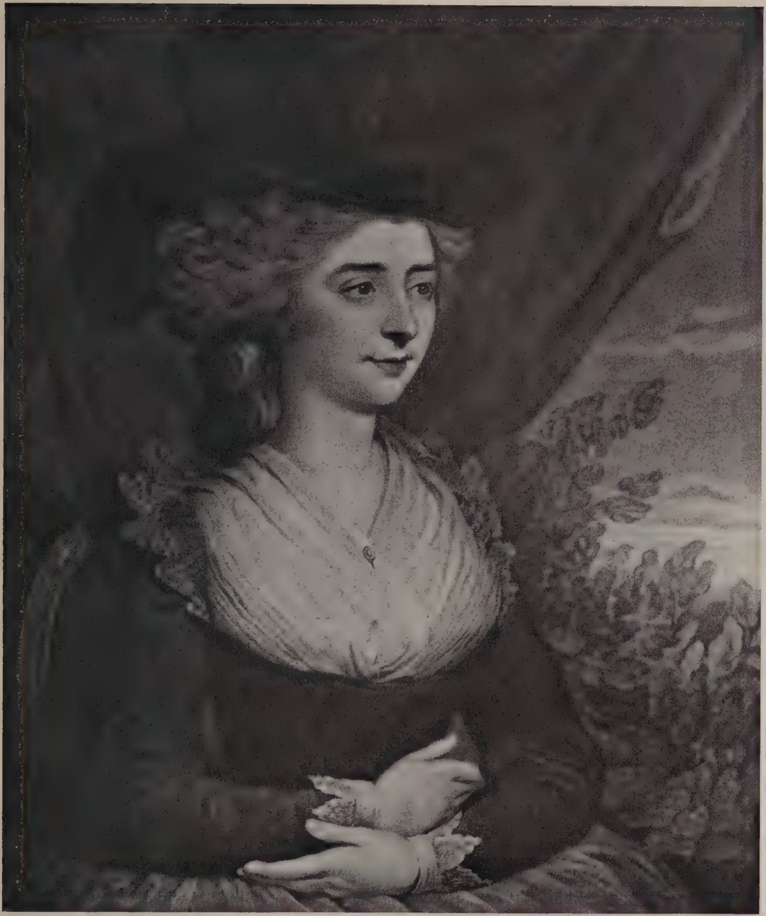
This is rather exalted, and particularly when one remembers that Mrs. Montagu and Mr. Vesey could and did flirt discreetly on occasion.

But if Miss Barrett can be a little cattish, we are in loyalty bound to retaliate by giving here a paragraph from Fanny Burney's reply to the above-quoted letter. I think it will be admitted to be a repast as rich and elegant at least as Mrs. Montagu's, and in its munificent rise and tenderly delicate progress an even more typical specimen of the later epistolary style of the author of *Cecilia* and *Camilla*.

From Miss Fanny Burney

I am quite at a loss what thanks to return for the repast equally rich and elegant with which you have at once mentally and substantially entertained us—*us* permit me to say, for here I may aspire to coupling myself with Mrs. Delany since we have participated in both the entertainments and participate in the grateful acknowledgements we entreat you to accept. Are you angry? No dear Madam you cannot be angry that I communicated to Mrs. Delany a letter that could not but be soothing and consolatory to her; acute as her sorrow has been and deep as it must ever remain, she bore it from the first with patience and resignation, and she now diminishes it all she can by receiving in good part such comfort and relief as her surviving friends can afford her. Could I knowing this with-hold from her such a solace as sympathising kindness from Mrs. Montagu? especially as it cannot be said to open the wound afresh, for the wound, alas, has never been closed. That the sting of death is sin is most truly observed, and I had the pleasure to see a smile of satisfaction brighten her benignant countenance when she considered, from your stating it how happily it was applied here. I am sorry—I had almost said *surprised* at dear Mrs. Vesey's continual regret: but a heart so much framed for tenderness weighs not always the full value of what excites it, and where there is too much kindness for discrimination, the scentless "gaudy flower," or the permanent "reviving aromatic," seem to have an equal claim on the affections, however wide the difference of their desert. The beneficence of their Majesties and its happy effect upon their venerable Protegée, would almost make Royalists of Rebels, if witnessed in its munificent rise, and most tenderly delicate progress.

In 1786, when Richard Cumberland published through Dilly in the *Observer* a malicious visit to Vanessa, caricaturing Mrs. Montagu, Fanny Burney valiantly defended her to Queen Charlotte (who read the article aloud), protesting that it was a most illiberal and injurious assault, "for whatever may be Mrs. Montagu's foibles, she is free, I believe from all vice, and as a member of society she is magnificently



FRANCES BURNEY
After E. F. Burney

useful. The Queen was very ready to hear me, and to concur in thinking such usage very cruel."

True to her novel-reading habits, Mrs. Montagu —urged by Mr. W. Pepys' commendation—perused *Cecilia* on her coach journeys. Remembering from her own vivid descriptions what travel in a coach-and-six meant, and what rough weather these cumbrous vessels made in the mud and ruts of eighteenth-century roads (remembering, also, my own dogged but futile attempt to read *Cecilia*, in five volumes 12mo), one cannot wonder that Mrs. Montagu's eyesight failed her in later years; but *Cecilia* was read, and a long letter of critical approval was duly despatched to Mr. Pepys.

I find few references of interest concerning Fanny in the later Montagu letters, and no trace of the chill reservations which recur on the other side. Here are two:

1786.

I hope Mr. Hastings will get through all the embarassment his enemies have raised, but it seems his lot, as it has been of many, to have warm enemies, and cold friends. *Cecilia* Burney is the Burney the Queen has appointed to attend her as Dresser. Her Majesty spoke of her to me last spring in a manner which made me nothing surprized at her preferment, and indeed she well deserves the royal protection.

To Mrs. Carter

1791.

I had the pleasure of receiving a good account of Miss Burneys health by my pretty amiable Neighbor Mrs. Waddington, who dined with me the day before yesterday. Miss Burney is with her sister, whose House is about half a mile distant from Mr. Lockes, and they meet every day, and must form a most agreable and charming society; it is the union of virtue, talents, and taste.

One feels, however, as one reads Fanny Burney's *Diary* entries of her rencontres with Mrs. Montagu that the younger woman was always on her guard, and never lowered the barrier of reserve and restraint which Mr. Crisp and Mrs. Thrale had inculcated. Of a meeting in 1791 she writes, "The circle was formalised and never broken into. Mr. Pepys and Dr. Blagden were of the party, but no one ventured to break the ring." Earlier she had confided to Mrs. Thrale of her: "Many as are the causes by which respect may be lessened, there are very few by which it can be afterwards restored to its first dignity. But where there is real affection the case is exactly reversed; few things can weaken, and every trifle can revive it."

Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Thrale, too, were very good friends—up to a point. Mr. Thrale, indeed, was a great favourite with her, and she did her best to look after him and his unconscionable appetite during his Bath visits. It was at the Thrales' at Streatham that Fanny Burney was introduced to Mrs. Montagu, and revealed by Mrs. Thrale—to the young lady's pretended confusion—as the author of *Evelina*. Fanny writes:

> We see Mrs. Montagu very often and I have already spent six evenings with her at various houses. I am very glad at this opportunity of seeing so much of her, for allowing a little for parade and ostentation which her power in wealth and rank in literature, offer some excuse for, her conversation is very agreeable; she is always reasonable and sensible and sometimes instructive and entertaining; and I think of our Mrs. Thrale we may say the reverse, for she is always entertaining and instructive and sometimes reasonable and sensible; and I write this because she is just now looking over me—not but what I think it too!

Writing to Mrs. Vesey in August 1777, Mrs. Montagu reports:

To Mrs. Vesey

SANDLEFORD, *Aug.* 12*th*, 1777.

Mr. and Mrs. Dunbar dined with me the day after you left them, we talkd of you with more tenderness than one ever does of those who are not either on the other side the Sea that girts our Island, or the Styx ; without such seperation one never does ample justice to a character.

No indeed Mrs. Vesey, while your merits were in Bolton Row they elbow'd my merits in Hillstreet, and I never fully expanded them in talk and report. . . .

On Wednesday I dined at Mr. Thrales at Streatham, where you were most honourably mention'd, and as you were so far off, I did not contradict what was said of your virtues, your talents, your manners, etc. We had a most elegant dinner at Mr. Thrales, and the best of all feasts, sense, and witt, and good humour. Mrs. Thrale is a Woman of very superior understanding, and very respectable as a Wife, a Mother, a Friend, and a Mistress of a Family. Mr. Thrale has a fruit garden and Kitchen Garden that may vye with the Hesperians gardens for fruit and flowers. The next day I dined at Mr. Ellis's, walkd where Pope had walkd, and sat where he had sat ; but alas ! I came back as prosaic as I went, nor did I feel that kind of enthusiasm I should have done if the place had once belonged to Shakespear or Milton, or Spencer. I admire and honour Mr. Pope, he is a charming writer, and has every perfection a satirist and moral writer can have, but that something which makes a poet divine, that lifts him "above the visible diurnal sphere," that gives him visions of worlds unknown, makes him sing like a seraphim, tune his harp to the musick of the spheres, and raise enchantments around him, was not in the said Mr. Pope ; so tho I pay him great respect I keep my enthusiastick adoration for the great magicians who work supernatural wonders.

It is, by the way, worthy of passing mention that it was James Woodhouse, Mrs. Montagu's cobbler-poet-bailiff at Sandleford, who first brought about Dr. Johnson's acquaintance with the Thrales. This was in January 1765, when Murphy, an old friend of Thrale's, expressed his desire to bring Dr. Johnson to visit them at Southwark. Mrs. Thrale says :

"At last it was resolved that one Woodhouse, a shoemaker who had written some verses, and been asked to some tables, should likewise be asked to ours, and made a temptation to Mr. Johnson to meet him ; accordingly he came, and Mr. Murphy at four o'clock brought Mr. Johnson to dinner. We liked each other so well that the next Thursday was appointed for the same company to meet, exclusive of the shoemaker, and since then Johnson has remained to this day our constant acquaintance visitor companion and friend." Poor Woodhouse, having brought about that momentous acquaintance, received short shrift. Johnson recommended him to study Addison night and day "if you mean either to be a good writer, or what is more worth, an honest man"; and added later: "They had better furnish the man with good implements for his trade than raise subscriptions for his poems."

After Mr. Thrale's unsuccessful stand for the borough of Southwark, his wife wrote to Mrs. Montagu:

From Mrs. Thrale

Streatham, *Saturday Sept. 16th* [1780].

Dear Madam—I have endured a great deal, but your kindness would sooth any care, and your Regard make amends for almost any Disappointment. Mr. Thrale is once more recovered to Life Intellect & Limbs, and my Gratitude for the Blessing will I hope drive away the bitter Remembrance of what is past. His being seiz'd so publickly lost the Election, for who would vote for a Man they thought actually dead? so that though he appeared on the Hustings the third Day amidst a shouting Populace, no Efforts could regain a Majority so early lost. Sir Richard Jebb is really a Treasure to Society, and in contributing to your recovery has conferr'd a Benefit on the public, while few private Families I'm sure can owe him more than ours for the restoration of Dear Mr. Thrale.

Adieu Madam, and accept my most grateful & affectionate Thanks. Was I less languid I would write a longer letter in defiance of double Postage: but this last Agony has a little hurt my Health & lowered my Spirits—I must try to refit though, lest another Storm overtake the shattered Bark of your ever faithful as obliged H. L. T.

But behind these mutual compliments there lurked both in Mrs. Thrale's and Fanny Burney's feelings a certain subacid tincture which found amusing expression in the records of both. Fanny's mentor, Mr. Crisp, had taken a dislike to Mrs. Montagu (though he did not know her personally), and did not scruple to convey his opinion to his Evelina in very plain language; and her "Daddy's" estimate—based, apparently, on some of the juvenile letters to the Duchess of Portland—had doubtless its effect; whilst Doctor Johnson's admiration for Mrs. Thrale encouraged her to look askance at other "Queens" who might bid for his allegiance. And so we get delightful little feline amenities such as these from Miss Burney on making Mrs. Montagu's acquaintance:

"She is middlesized, very thin and looks infirm: She has a sensible and penetrating countenance and the air and manner of a woman accustomed to being distinguished and of great parts. Dr. Johnson, who agrees in this, told us that Mrs. Hervey of his acquaintance, says, she can remember Mrs. Montagu *trying* for this same air and manner."

"Mrs. Montagu was very flashy and talked away all the evening."

"As to Mrs. Montagu she reasons well and harangues well, but wit she has none. Mrs. Thrale has almost too much."

Mrs. Thrale herself flatly contradicts Fanny's too sweeping dictum. In a manuscript note in Forbes' *Life of Beattie* she admitted frankly that Mrs. Montagu "had a great deal of ready wit." Beattie himself wrote that she had more wit than any one he had ever known.

"The Bishop of Chester waited for Mrs. Thrale to speak. Mrs. Thrale for the Bishop; so neither of them spoke at all! Mrs. Montagu cared not a fig, as long as she spoke herself, and so she harangued away."

Describing a visit to the "Blue Palace" (Montagu

House) in May 1782, she says that Lord Bristol was the star of the evening, the only spouter—Mrs. M. excepted,—though Lord Westcote tried to twinkle with him.

And from Mrs. Thrale we find notes such as these:

" Mrs. Montagu was brilliant in diamonds, solid in judgment, critical in talk." (1780.)

" Mrs. Montagu has been here; she says I ought to have a statue erected to me for my diligent attendance on my compting house duties [at the Southwark brewery]. The *wits* and the *blues* (as it is the fashion to call them) will be happy enough, no doubt, to have me safe at the brewery—*out of their way*."

Fanny Burney, indeed, admits the rivalry:

" More bland and more gleeful than that of either Mrs. Vesey or Mrs. Montagu was the personal celebrity of Mrs. Thrale. Mrs. Vesey, indeed, gentle and diffident, dreamed not of any competition, but Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Thrale had long been set up as rival candidates for colloquial eminence, and each of them thought the other alone worthy to be her peer. Openly therefore when they met they combated for precedence of admiration, with placid though high strained intellectual exertion on the one side, and exuberant pleasantry or classical allusion or quotation on the other; without the smallest malice in either."

The nuances of character of these dear ladies are delightfully revealed in their mutual chronicles. The hints and reservations of the Burney, the frank jealousy of Mrs. Thrale, give an amusing tartness to their eulogies. Mrs. Montagu could fly into a petulant passion with Johnson, and write with exaggerated bitterness of those she disliked, but these little sugared acid drops were not, as a rule, in her critical dispensary.

" I know," she writes to Mr. Pepys from Bath in May 1780, " you will be glad to hear Mr. Thrale is certainly mended in his health, but the great felicity of his life, at all times and on all occasions is, his having such a Wife. If her uncommon talents and virtues all applied in his service did not preserve him from every fatiguing attention he would soon succombe. She is to fly to London tomorrow on election. You will certainly see her before she returns to Mr. Thrale here."

And referring to her custom of keeping novels for travelling companions on her journeys :

> Many a measured mile and letterd post have I passd insensibly, and unheeded, by being engaged in some frolick with Tom Jones, or absorbed in the wonderful adventures of Robinson Crusoe. I can with great truth assure you, I shall look on my long journey with much less apprehension by having Cecilia for my fellow Traveller. If Cecilia has half the sense, and half the amiability of Miss Burney, I shall find improvement and delight in her company. Perhaps you may think my considering these kind of works chiefly as travelling companions shews a degree of contempt for them, but it arises from a very different principle, a persuasion that they have power to interest and amuse, and that nothing can hinder sympathy with the circumstances and situations, but the intrusions of business or company. Interruptions and intrusions of other objects are fatal to sympathy, and Fiction fades away in the importunate solicitations and presence of Realities.

It is a little difficult to-day to realise the extraordinary outburst of indignation caused amongst her quondam friends by Mrs. Thrale's attachment to an Italian gentleman much of her own age and her former husband's station, and, like the highly respected Dr. Burney, a teacher of music. If Johnson's friend thought of marrying she must be mad ; and Fanny Burney wrote : " Dr. Pepys had a long private conference with me concerning Mrs. Thrale, with whose real state of health he is better acquainted than anybody, and sad indeed was all he said." When Mrs. Thrale came to Harley Street in January 1782 after her husband's death, Pepys asked her, as she puts it, " to dine in Wimpole Street to meet Mrs. Montagu and a whole *army of blues*," but the poor lady declined, convinced they were all watching her husband-hunting, and that the Pepys brothers in particular were running about the town spying and enquiring as to her doings and her men friends. So the "army of blues" thought madness a charitable hypothesis for an impossible infatuation with a vagabond fortune-hunter.

It was thwarted passion that was really the matter with Hester Thrale, and jealousy that was to a large extent at the bottom of Dr. Johnson's anger; whilst Fanny Burney, schooled by her father in the strait sect of worldly wisdom, echoed the Doctor's views, and the rest of the world adopted the easiest solution of what seemed to them an inexplicable step.

So when the Piozzi marriage thunderbolt finally fell in 1784, Mrs. Montagu spoke her mind very frankly and definitely:

15 *July* 1784.
[The marriage actually took place on July 25.]

Mrs. Thrales marriage has taken such horrible possession of my mind I cannot advert to any other subject. I am sorry and feel the worst kind of sorrow, that which is blended with shame. Sorrow lies in state on the Tomb of the Dead, in the regions of melancholly it preserves a certain dignity and fears not to meet the eye which casts a look of pity on it, but when one laments and weeps over the disgrace of a Friend, bitter are the sensations, and as the cause of ones grief is an object of contempt and scorn one cannot disburthen the heart by communicating its sufferings, but shuts it up with all its poisonous and baleful qualities. I am myself convinced that the poor Woman is mad, and indeed have long suspected her mind was disorderd. She was the best Mother, the best Wife, the best friend, the most amiable member of Society. She gave the most prudent attentions to her Husbands business during his long state of imbecility and after his death, till she had an opportunity of disposing well of the great Brewery. I bring in my verdict lunacy in this affair. I am heartily grieved for Miss Burney, and Dr. Johnson; female delicacy, and male wisdom, will be much shocked, and they have both a very sincere attachment to their friends, and a delicate sense of honour. I respected Mrs. Thrale, and was proud of the honour she did to the human and female character in fulfilling all the domestick duties and cultivating her mind with whatever might adorn it. I would give much to make everyone think of her as mad, the best and wisest are liable to lunacy; if she is not considerd in that light she must throw a disgrace on her sex. . . .

Mrs. Vesey replies:

You must accept Mrs. Thrale's marriage with Piozzi. Her daughter has told her she can never acknowledge such a Father and she and her three sisters have taken refuge with their guardian at Brighthelmstone. She has cut down the trees on her estate in Wales and would have carried her daughters abroad if the trustees would have allowed. . . . The Bridegroom very black, low and mean. I wish Master Hymen had not been so full of pranks this year. She has wrote to Doctor Johnson upon this occasion and desired he would not censure what she has done. He burst into tears, I wish we could see his answer. This has been the occasion of Miss Burney's illness.

And a little later Mrs. Montagu writes:

Mrs. Thrale is undoubtedly married to Signr Piozzi, at which I am still more grieved than astonish'd. She has very uncommon parts, but certainly never appear a Person of sound understanding; who ever possesses that blessing never is guilty of absurd conduct, or does anything which the World calls strange.

Miss Burney and Dr. Johnson have been much afflicted on account of Mrs. Thrales indiscretion, and indeed I pity them both, but what misery may in time await the poor Woman herself one cannot guess. Piozzi has bought an estate in Italy with her money; there she will probably weep out the rest of her days, for bitter must be her reflections when her passions subside and give place to reason.

Dr. Johnson, by his reply of July 2, had interpreted Mrs. Thrale's letter to him of June 30 from Bath as almost certainly implying that she was already married to Piozzi, and Mrs. Montagu, who had doubtless seen the circular enclosed with it, probably thought the same; but the Roman Catholic ceremony took place at the Spanish Embassy on July 23, and the Protestant wedding at St. James', Bath, on the 25th.

Mrs. Piozzi, as we know, was very far from weeping out the rest of her days in Italy; she travelled through France to Turin, Milan, Verona, Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples, spending nearly two years in Italy, and returning to England by Germany and Holland early in 1787. Whilst abroad she wrote the *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson*, which was finished at Florence, revised by Lucas Pepys and Lysons, and published by Cadell in 1786; and her travel journal appeared three years later; in the preface to which she remarked that she had not thrown her thoughts into the form of private letters. "My old acquaintance rather chose to amuse themselves with conjectures than to flatter me with tender enquiries during my absence." She had indeed been pursued by abuse from Baretti and by newspaper recrimination at Johnson's death; but her Johnson *Anecdotes*, though damned by Walpole and damnable to Boswell, were a great and immediate success, the King being unable to obtain a copy by the evening of the day of publication. The anecdotes, as she explained, were written from memory, which might excuse some inaccuracies; but "a trick, which I have seen played on common occasions of sitting steadily down at the other end of the room to write at the moment what should be said in company either by Dr. Johnson or to him, I never practised myself nor approved of in another. There is something so ill-bred and so inclining to treachery in this conduct, that were it commonly adopted all confidence would soon be exiled from society and a conversation assembly room would become tremendous as a court of justice"; a verdict in which most of us would agree, while adding a mental rider that, in the case referred to, the end justified the means.

Boswell was stung to embittered rejoinder, and seized upon the Montagu *Essay* disavowal, which was repeated in the *Anecdotes*, and which he proceeded to denounce at length in a letter to the *Gazetteer*.

Boswell, in the Hebrides Tour, had reported Johnson as saying of Mrs. Montagu's *Essay*: "Reynolds is fond of her book, and I wonder at it, for neither I nor Beauclerk nor Mrs. Thrale could get through it." Now Boswell and Mrs. Piozzi did not love one another, and the latter hastened to write from Naples: "I do not delay a moment to declare that on the contrary I have always commended it myself, and heard it commended by every one else; and few things would give me more concern than to be thought incapable of tasting or unwilling to testify my opinion of its excellence." Horace Walpole was, of course, delighted, and says he has just seen (March 1786) "a very clever letter from Mrs. Piozzi to Mrs. Montagu to disavow a jackanapes who has lately made a noise here, one Boswell by anecdotes of Dr. Johnson. . . . The cock biographer has fixed a direct lie on the hen. . . . She and Boswell and their hero are the joke of the public . . . enough of these mountebanks."

Unfortunately for Mrs. Piozzi, Boswell proceeded to note that Mrs. Thrale had herself seen and read the Journal containing this very passage without remark or objection, and that, though he had struck out her name when the sheets were printing, he had afterwards reinstated it, thinking "he had no right to deprive Mrs. Thrale of the high honour which Dr. Johnson had done her." Tantaene animis coelestibus irae?

Walpole, indeed, accused Boswell of betraying his master's secrets and weaknesses as a means of hurting his own enemies, "which he has done shamefully, particularly against Mrs. Piozzi and Mrs. Montagu." Mrs. Piozzi wrote and published a letter to Mrs. Montagu repudiating Boswell's statement about the *Essay*; and in 1786 she wrote to

Daniel Lysons from Rome: "Is Mrs. Montagu convinced of my respect and of Mr. Boswell's flippancy? I hope so." Altogether the public got a good deal of harmless amusement out of this quadrangular and very insignificant duel.

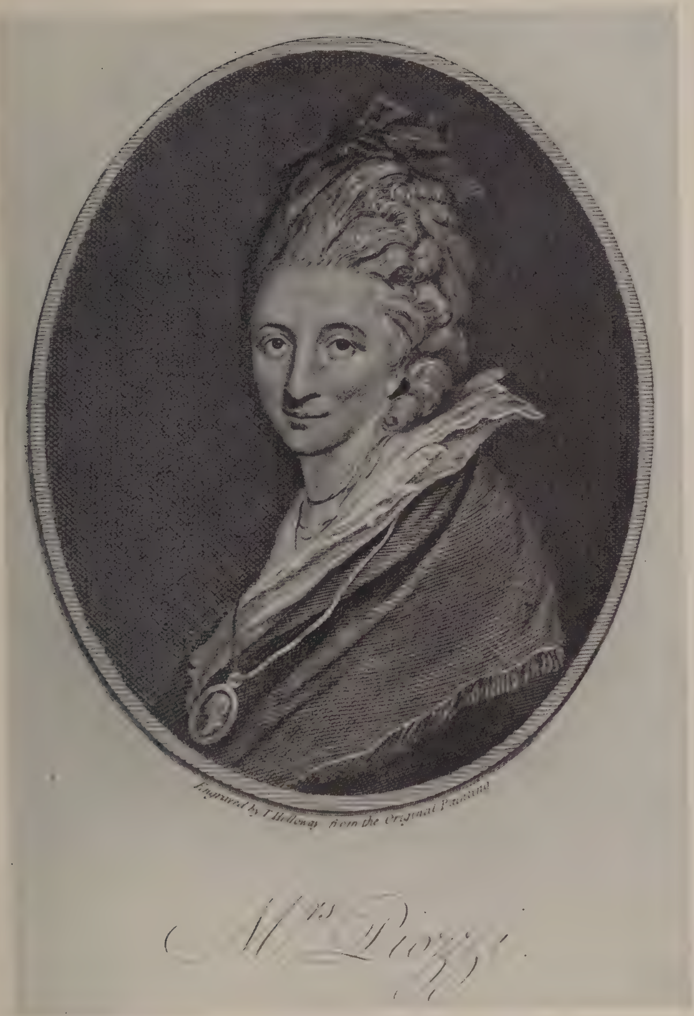
In 1789, according to Mrs. Piozzi, Mrs. Montagu tried to make up again, but she was not to be taken and left, she wanted no flash or flattery; she never had had more of either than now, or was ever half so happy—and so on. Her still embittered spirit vented itself in hard sayings from which scarce one of her old friends—not even "the insolent saucy spirited little puss," Fanny Burney—escaped; and it would be obviously unfair to judge her from the outpourings of a very facile pen at a time of much misunderstanding and of conflicting passions.

To her sister Mrs. Montagu wrote:

Sunday the 6 (1789 ?).

I have been amused by Mrs. Piozzis letters, tho the style is sometimes Vulgar, sometimes pedantick, but she writes like a Woman of parts; her accounts of things are lively and clever, and her observations often very ingenious and sensible.

And, after all, let us end by remembering that Mrs. Thrale protested volubly that Boswell was wrong, and that she really did "get through" the *Essay on Shakespeare*. There is comfort in that.


Engraved by T. Holloway from the Original Painting
Mrs Piozzi.

HESTER LYNCH PIOZZI

1792

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE JACOBINS—ENGLISH VIEWS ON FRENCH EVENTS

Letter from James Beattie. The Dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester and their Duchesses. William Gilpin, Paine, and Priestley. French news. Duchesse de Biron. The Sans-culottes. Miss Pulteney. Rumour of the King's death. Duc d'Orléans. The Primate of Ireland on the French Revolution. Visit to Kew. Trial of Louis. Duc de Fitz James. The Houghton pictures.

THE year 1792 opens with a very long letter from James Beattie, from which a few extracts only can be given. It is dated January 5.

Though I have not of late had time to express my gratitude for the honour of your kind letter, my heart has often thanked you in silence for that and for all your other goodness; the recollection of which is one of the chief comforts of my life. Our excellent friend Sir William Forbes, who lately went to London with his daughter, would no doubt inform you, that I have for these ten weeks past been more employed, than I ever was in my life before. Two years ago, or more, I came under terms with a bookseller to get ready for the press the second volume of Elements of Moral Science; but my son's long illness prevented that, by disqualifying me for every sort of mental application. The bookseller, I own, was not a hard taskmaster; he knew, and he pitied, my condition; nor did he even urge the performance of my engagement: which made me the more solicitous to perform it, as soon as I should in any degree recover the use of my faculties. Accordingly I have laboured prodigiously this great while; not withstanding the weakness of my eyes; a fixed rheumatism in my right arm which sometimes disables my right hand; and my business in the college, which employs me three hours a day. Unless something unforseen prevent me, I hope to have that second volume ready for the press before the end of March : it will be considerably larger than the first volume, and comprehend Elements of Ethicks, Economicks, Politicks etc. In the chapter of Economicks I had occasion to consider, among other things, the relation of master and servant ; which brought slavery in my mind, and gave rise to a dissertation of the *lawfulness* and *expediency* of the Slave-trade. On this point, I am perhaps more particular than is consistent with the brevity of an elementary book ; but when I had once got into the subject, I found it not very easy to get out again ; and I could not resist that opportunity of introducing a compliment to Mr. Montagu, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, and those other champions of humanity and justice, who in this business made so noble an appearance last session of parliament. I hope Mr. and Mrs. Montagu and their lovely family are well : I long to hear of them, and sincerely offer them my most respectful and affectionate compliments. . . .

France seems to be running fast into " Confusion worse confounded." Their national assembly puts me in mind of Barebone's parliament ; and I shall be very much surprised, if it does not come to the same ignominious end. The best thing for France would be, that both parties should unite, and refer themselves to the arbitration of a learned and venerable body of men, chosen for the purpose, and vested with authority to reform the abuses of the last government, and establish some decent political system in the room of the present anarchy. But how can this be the case while the power remains in the hands of despicable usurpers, who know not what true political liberty is ; are ignorant of the very first principles of legislation ; and too self-conceited, either to take lessons from history, or to profit by the example of their contemporaries and neighbours.

The primrose path which led Beattie from " Economicks " to " Mr. Montagu and his lovely family " is typical of a good deal of the book-making of the times.

To Matthew Montagu

I met passing through Newbury 3000 sheep come from Wayhill Fair. I was glad they were going on to the Graziers and not the Butchers. I stoppd my carriage for fear it might do harm to the harmless. I should not feel the same tender concern for the Parisian Women who the newspapers say are as boisterous and mischievous as the Rougher Sex. At all times it has appeared to me that the French women have too much of the male character, the men of the female.

To her Sister

Jan. 26.

The Duchess of York is much liked by all who have conversed with her. She fainted at the Drawing Room at the birthday, and by the account which I received of Mrs. M. Montagu of the croud I do not wonder at it. Lord Sandwich is in a very declining state of health which I am sorry for as he will be a great loss to Mrs. Poyntz and her children and he has behaved to me with such respect and attention as I have not found from some of my near relations by blood. . . . There are suspicions that the Pantheon was set on fire by design, but those suspicions are not proved on any one.

Frederick, Duke of York, the King's second son, had married Frederica, daughter of Frederick the Great, in the previous September.

The Pantheon, opened in 1772 and long the haunt of the macaronis, had latterly been transformed into an Opera House. It was burnt down this January 14, and rebuilt for masquerades in 1795.

The Duke of Gloucester had, it will be remembered, clandestinely married Lady Waldegrave as far back as 1766, and his brother the Duke of Cumberland had married Anne Luttrell, widow of Christopher Horton, in 1771.

The Duchess of Cumberland's sister, Lady Elizabeth (Betsy) Luttrell, whom Lady Louisa Stuart describes as precisely a roué in petticoats, coarse, boisterous, and witty, was an inveterate gambler, led the gaming tables, and was loudest in ridicule and mimicry of the Court, the King's "What? What?" the Queen's wide mouth and bad English, the ill-cut clothes and pious virtues of Buckingham House. Mrs. Matthew writes to her aunt:

The publick is alarmd very much at a report that we are to be taxd to discharge the debts two young Gentlemen have incurred. Our new Duchess I hear has modest and pleasing manners; she visits at Cumberland House, but I hope will not engage at Lady E Luttrels Faro table.

A few extracts from summer letters of this year to her sister and to Mrs. Carter will indicate how Mrs. Montagu's days and thoughts were occupied.

I have been amused by Mr. Gilpins remarks on Forrest Scenes. He is happy in his descriptions, and his taste for rural objects, and I had rather wander in Forrests with such an Author, than accompany a modern novel writers adventures. I am sorry to hear Mrs. Charlotte Smiths Novel is so wildly Democratical. I have not read it, but find it offends all sober people. I am more mortified at this, as it affects her character, than if it related merely to her Genius.

William Gilpin (brother of Sawrey, the animal painter) had published several volumes describing his summer tours, and illustrated by aquatints. Charlotte Smith, whose *Emmeline* had made her some name as a novelist, published *Celestina* and *Desmond* this year, very successful in their day, but now long forgotten.

I sympathise in your joy that Mr. Pitt, who has done so much for his Country, has at last got something for himself, but the publick will ill requite its obligations to him if he does not obtain much greater Personal benefit. I think Ld Gower, and his family, must have rejoyced at landing on the Brittish Shore. I do not pity those who encouraged the French Rebellion, for now being the Victims of the Mob they made their instruments. The accounts of murderd bodies thrown into the Seine, where they lye and putrify, make me dread a Pestilence, which will be communicated to us even without the endeavours of Paine and Priestly, and their worthy adherents.

Pitt had just received from the King the lucrative office of Warden of the Cinque Ports, and was awaiting re-election. Thomas Paine, who had recently published the first part of his *Rights of Man* in reply to Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution*, was compelled this summer to fly to France, and became a French citizen in August. The bulk of the country was in no mood to stand the activities of the revolutionary party over here, and Joseph Priestley, the learned advocate of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, proposing to be present at a dinner of the Constitutional Society of Birmingham to commemorate the fall of the Bastille, had his house at Fairhill wrecked and most of his library and laboratory destroyed; he, too, found life in England too "uncomfortable," and emigrated to America two years later, considering New York preferable to Carlyle's "iron Birmingham shouting 'Church and King,' and itself knew not why, bursting out into rage, drunkenness, and fire."

A scheme had been laid to poison the K of Sardinia of which having intimation by a letter, the Palace Gates were shut, his Cooks were searchd, and on two french Cooks much poison was found. A French Lady, who had expended vast sums to encourage all sorts of mischief, had at the same time despatchd a Courier to Petersburg with letters to some Person there to get the Czarina poisond, but the K of Sardinia had the Courier stopp'd. What wicked wretches are the French Democrates!

From Mrs. Matthew Montagu

MANCHESTER SQUARE, *June.*

I am sure you must have read with horror, all the news from France which has appeared in the Papers. It is perfectly authenticated that the multitude, carried Cannon up to the Apartment of his Majesty, and forced their way into it, by pick-axes. They threatened destruction on the Queen, and said that if the King did not give up his veto, they w^{d} stain every stone in Paris with her blood. She remained undaunted in their presence, and his Majesty appears to have on this occasion retrieved his character from the imputation of Cowardice. Nothing could surpass his resolution in refusing the many deputations sent to him, and I hope his firmness may intimidate the rascally and murderous Jacobins. As to the "Sans culottes" (by which you must understand his Poissardes) they seem more qualified to inhabit the infernal regions, than any part of this globe ; and altho' they may come under the denomination of "sans culottes" in France, In England we sh^d think "they wore the *breeches*."

Louis had courage enough, if only, as Carlyle says, of the passive half, and his behaviour during that memorable afternoon of June 20 when the sans-culotte mob surged into the palace and battered in the door of his chamber was pathetic in its undaunted calm. The Queen, with her sister and children, sat behind the great council table surrounded by four of her ladies, protected by the spell of her serene dignity more than by the bodyguard of grenadiers before the table; holding in her arms the little Dauphin, who wore the Red Cap offered her by one of the crazy straggling crowd that streamed for three mortal hours through the Tuileries chambers.

His wife writes to Matthew at Denton :

[? *late in July*].

I perfectly agree with you in thinking our statues will be better in bronze. Flaxman thought they would darken the room, and said that he made most of them of a pink or flesh colour at present. . . . . I am happy to find that the anniversary of the French Revolution passed with such tranquillity in England, and we are not a little astonishd that it was undisturbed at Paris. Petion is reinstated in his office and the Jacobin party are certainly preeminent. There are to be 8 days of feasting and entertainment at the expense of the Jacobins, which is supposed to be a manoevre of that Party by keeping the minds of the people in a chearful state of fermentation till the arrival of the southern insurgents, when they will burst like a torrent upon the subdued royalists.

Pétion, virtuous Patriot, had been over in London during the last summer, toasting revolution in Constitutional Reform clubs, and on his return to Paris in the autumn had been made mayor. The Marseillais, the famous five hundred and seventeen brethren who knew how to die, arrived at Charenton on July 29, and entered Paris next day, to partake of the patriot feast, after being embraced by Mayor Pétion at the Town Hall, and having an appetising brush with the Filles-Saint-Thomas Tuileries Grenadiers, whom they sent scuttling back over the quickly hoisted drawbridge before sitting down to their frugal *déjeuner* in the Champs Elysées.

Within a fortnight, Mrs. Matthew Montagu's "torrent" had burst ; the Tuileries were sacked, the new Commune had taken all powers to itself, the throne had fallen, and the King and Queen were its prisoners in the Temple.

To her Sister

I entertain little hope that the K and Queen and Dauphin will escape assassination. Most terrible [tales] are brought daily by the fugitive Aristocrats of the difficulties they had to escape. The Duchess of Biron finding her servants intended to betray her, was obliged to take her flight without an attendant. She got the Master of a Smuggling Vessel to land her near Portsmouth, but from the apprehensions she had sufferd was incapable of taking any care of herself ; happily one of the Conways saw her on the shore ; he gave great attention and informd the Duke of Richmond of her situation ; his Grace carried (her) to Goodwood and sent for Madme de Cambise, her intimate Friend to come to her,—which she did immediately; but the Duchess still remaind in a state of almost insensibility. I am grieved for her, she is a Woman of unblemishd character, and pleasing manners, of the highest birth, and vast fortune ; after a most generous present to her unworthy Husband an income of £9000 a year remaind to her, when she was in England two years ago, and out of which she was very bountifull to her distressd Country Women. I suppose the intention of her Servants was to accuse her of sending money to the Emigrant Princes, which wd have served for a pretence to murder her, and plunder her fine Hotel. I learn from Montagu that there were many French Persons of condition at Newcastle, and a handsome collection was made for them, but alas ! this will soon be exhausted, and they will be reduced to great distress.

Curiously enough, it was the Duchesse de Biron and Madame de Boufflers who, in the summer of 1790, first awakened in the somnolent breast of Dr. Burney some uneasiness about his daughter's unrelieved vassalage at Court. "Mais Monsieur, est-ce possible? Mademoiselle votre fille n'a-t-elle point de vacance?" The remark led to a long converse between father and daughter; in which her resignation was virtually decided on, though it did not take effect till the following summer.

The Duchesse was, of course, the wife of the Revolutionary General who had fought with Lafayette in America, and who was now the boon companion of the Duc d'Orléans. But in the First Terror he unluckily incurred the dislike of the diabolic Fouquier, and Samson's guillotine made the Duchesse a widow.

She had, as we have seen, been in England previously, and had shown her courage at the Paris opera in the winter of 1790–91. This precipitate return was, it seems, from a visit to Holland. Both she and Madame de Cambis, "beautiful as a Madonna," became great friends of Horace Walpole's, and settled near him.

From E. and M. Montagu

Aug. 14th.

The Prince and Princess de Lion were embarqued before we left Shooters Hill; their ill fortune pursued them, as they were chased on their passage by a French Man of War, and narrowly escaped being taken, so that their agonies were great and her situation (big with child) truly distressing. But what can equal the horrors of Saturdays proceedings in France. The unfortunate Queen torn to pieces by that merciless race of human wolves and tygers. I have not heard many particulars of the dreadful catastrophe but those that have reached me are too horrible to relate.

Friday and Saturday, August 10 and 11, were the days of the sack of the Tuileries and the King's ordeal at the Manège, and London evidently believed that

Marie Antoinette had actually been murdered on her way from the Palace to the Assembly. Indeed, on that ghastly day of massacre it is marvellous that, mobbed, robbed, curst, insulted as she was, she escaped with her life.

The papers will have informd you that Miss Pulteney is created Baroness of Bath ; her Father wrote me a polite letter to inform me of the promise before the Patent was sign'd. This title looks as if she intended to marry a Commoner, or *to live and dye in single blessedness.* My news paper of to day says Mr. Pulteney has laid out £100,000 on speculation in Pensylvania ; a strong proof that Riches do not satisfy, but methinks the sum is rather too large to be laid out in hopes and uncertainties. I respect more Augustus Caesars maxim, not to fish with a golden hook.

The following from a September letter dating from Sandleford to Mrs. Carter illustrates the excursions and alarms to which the country was subject in days of much slower intelligence and means of communication :

I write to you in much better spirits to day than I should have done yesterday morning, when an idle report of the death of our good King was brought me from Newbury. Some Person, dressd like a Gentleman in a handsome post Chaise, had at Reading said at the Inn on saturday night that his Majesty was suddenly dead of an Apoplexy, and it was also reported, that the sad event had been announced by expresses to two Gentlemen in Office in that Neighbourhood. Tho we doubted the truth of this, yet in a matter which so nearly and dearly concerns this Kingdom, we sufferd no light trepidations. Mr. Montagu immediately set out on the road nearest leading to Weymouth, Your Humble Servant towards Reading, to meet Carriages coming that morning from London. By that time I had got half way to Reading I was assured by so many Carriages that had left London in the morning, that no such sad tydings had reachd London or still prevaild at Reading, that my mind was much relieved. Mr. Montagu also returnd from his enquiries far less unhappy than when he set out, however we sent again at night to get intelligence, from those who left London at a late hour, all circumstances concurred to allay our fears, but on a subject so important, we were not quite at ease till this mornings news papers and letters arrived, untinged with dark reports. . . .

I see in this days papers that the Cardinal de Rochefoucault has been murderd. I hope the Duke de R. has escaped, he had the best character imaginable, and he seemd to me, when he visited me in Hill Street, to be void of vanity, frivolité, and all the French foibles. The last accounts from Paris are still more horrible than the preceeding ones. The Duke of Brunswick will soon give them chastisement, but this World affords none equal to their crimes.

The gods, however, had not willed things exactly so ; and within a month Brunswick's army, or what was left of it after his defeat by Dumouriez's second-in-command Kellermann, at La Lune and Valmy, was staggering back in full retreat through the mud and mire of Champagne.

The much-honoured Duc de la Rochefoucauld did not escape. "Journeying," says Carlyle, "by quick stages with his mother and wife towards the waters of Forges or some quieter country he was arrested at Gisors ; conducted along the streets amid effervescing multitudes, and killed dead 'by the stroke of a paving-stone hurled through the coach window.' Killed as a once Liberal, now Aristocrat ; Protector of Priests, Suspender of virtuous Pétions, detestable to Patriotism. He dies lamented of Europe ; his blood spattering the cheeks of his old mother, ninety-three years old."

To her Sister

I sympathise entirely with you in indignation at our malcontents, for never had any nation more reason to be satisfied with their condition nor greater prospect of an increasing prosperity. I am much afraid our good King and Queen will lose their amiable dutiful and promising son, his long bad state of health renders his pulmonary complaints very alarming. . . . I should have eaten my breakfast to day with much greater satisfaction had the news paper which accompanys my bread and butter given certain information of the defeat of Du

Mourier and his Democratic army, however I entertain great hopes we shall receive it by next post.

September.

My yesterdays paper gave me hopes that I long to have reallized, and am impatient for tomorrow for the chance of seeing the report confirm'd, I mean that of Du Mauriers army having made a present of themselves to the D of Brunswic; worthless is the Gift, and such an excess of poltronerie seems almost incredible, but it wou'd be a most blessed event, if fact. Because Liberty inspires Courage, the French have fancied the very name of it wou'd have the same effect, but I make no doubt experience will teach them that tho' the Free are brave, the Licentious are generally cowardly; they have already had many proofs of it. . . .

We must indeed be the maddest of all people to aim at innovations; yet there are numbers who are extravagant in their praises of the conduct of the french; some even Women, who I suppose envy the glory of the Poissardes. They make me wicked, for I wish to send them all to Paris, tho' I think it must be rather a worse place than les Enfers. That sounds less offensive to polite ears than the english name, by being less familiar to us.

Mrs. Montagu—and in very good company—had made the fundamental mistake of confounding the licence and intrigue of the Orleanist and Jacobin agitators with the genuine if mistaken faith in emancipation and liberty which had been awakened in 1789, and upon which the leaders had adroitly worked to their own ends.

To Mrs. Carter

28 [*September* 1792].

It is presumption in such a wretch as the D of Orleans to talk of l'egalite, not even all his titles, all his wealth, could ever make him equal to an honest Cobler. In his Garden of la Revolution he will not find the trees of life, or knowledge, . . .

I am much pleased with the account you gave me of the treatment of Tom Paine at Dover. I hope the finishing stroke will be given by the D: of Brunswick at Paris.

After the appearance of the second part of his *Rights of Man* Thomas Paine went over to Paris in September with several other English Jacobins. He was jeered and hissed at Dover and very nearly stoned from the beach. Carlyle's "rebellious staymaker" was a great drunkard, but the Girondins took him to their arms and made him a member of the Convention.

The following is from the Primate at Clifton, October 29:

> You have sent me a speech of a great Orator and Statesman. The art of misleading an audience is essential to those two characters; these are showy qualities that rouse attention and collect numbers. Mr. Fox on many occasions has appeared great, as an outspoken statesman, but never acted wisely, as a Minister or in private life. Mr. Pitt has manifested an accumulation of Talents, that have never appeared together, in any one man in my time. He is perfectly sensible that his whole plan may be defeated by future events that cannot be foreseen, and very judiciously leaves the impression of this Truth on the minds of his audience, as a preparative for a possible failure; and yet we find him, as if he had forgot the certain fluctuation which happens in all great states, delivering his opinions in a decisive manner, that, unquestionably there never was a time in the History of this Country, when, from the situation of Europe, we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of Peace, than we may at the present moment. In my poor conception, the Revolution in France will disturb the Peace of Europe and of all nations. The Conductors of it are dispersed all over France, but united by the means of corresponding Societies, and are professed Disciples of Rousseau and Voltaire; in these days, the great apostles of infidelity. It is not [un]usual for such men to propagate their opinions by persecutions. There are some appearance of a symmetrical persecution of Christianity.

The trial of Louis XVI. began on December 11, but sentence was not pronounced till January 18 and confirmed on the 20th.

> There is a paper from Paris to day which brings an account

of their Kings appearance on his tryal. The Assembly graciously permitted him to sit down. He denyd the truth of the accusations against him ; and spoke with great calmness and firmness. Care was taken to prevent mobs, and he came and returnd safe to his Prison, and was to be tryd again the next day. What will then be the decision we must wait to know.

1793

FANNY BURNEY'S MARRIAGE—WAR WITH FRANCE

Rearranging the library. James Lackington. Captain Pellew. Duke of Clarence. The Primate and Rokeby. Visits to Dowager Duchess of Beaufort and Miss Hannah More. Miss Burney's marriage. Lord Howe. St. Domingo. The émigrés.

Mrs. Montagu spent the winter and spring of this year at Portman Square, and then went for a short time to her adopted children at Shooter's Hill in May, proceeding to Sandleford in June. Later in the summer she paid a visit to the Primate at Clifton and to one or two other friends in the country, returning to Sandleford in September and to London in the late autumn. Montagu and his wife and rapidly increasing family occupied the Portman Square and Sandleford houses for some time, and his aunt, contemplating a prolific succession of little Montagus, got Mr. Wyatt to design an additional couple of nurseries there. Montagu meanwhile was occupied in rearranging the library and disposing of a large accumulation of old Mr. Montagu's mathematical books. His aunt writes:

I believe I mention'd to our dear little Friend in my last letter that I went to congratulate Ld and Lady Carnarvon on their new Honours, however they were gone to London in order to kiss their Majesties hands for these new Honours. I must have attaind that perfection of wisdom, which wonders at nothing, if I had not wonderd at this event.

If you take the trouble to have intercourse with a Bookseller in exchange, or binding books, I beg it may be with old Lackington, who wrote his Memoirs; I think he lives near

Moorfields. There is another Bookseller of his name in the City, but I should not put the same trust in him.

Henry Herbert, Lord Porchester of Highclere, was made Earl of Carnarvon on July 3.

James Lackington's great book emporium at the corner of Finsbury Square was known as The Temple of the Muses. He dealt strictly for cash, and sold 100,000 volumes a year at this time. The ground floor was occupied by a great circular counter for new books, and the galleries above, beneath the dome, were stored with older and second-hand works, growing shabbier and cheaper as you ascended from floor to floor. From personal experience of the disposal of old mathematical books it is surmised that Mr. Montagu's would have been found somewhere near the top; but it seems that the sum offered was so small that Mrs. Montagu decided to keep the books and commissioned Lackington to have them re-bound.

England had declared war with France in February, and British troops joined the Austrians in the Netherlands in May. Toulon was surrendered by the Royalists to Lord Hood's squadron, only to be recovered by the Republic later on, through a clever move carried out by a young artillery officer whose name was Napoleon Buonaparte.

There is no publick news, but the capture of the French Frigate by Captn Pellew—It has been a very gallant action, attended by very bloody consequences, as the lives lost on both sides have been very considerable—It is an earnest of future success, and much is to be expected from Lord Hoods squadron, which is sailed to the Mediterranean. The Duke of Clarence in all probability will be spared the hazard of any marine exploit, and we cannot lament his absence, as he seems to be so democratically inclined—It is said he actually supped with Dumourier whilst he was in London, and heard others if he did not join in the songs of Ça Ira, and the Marche des Marseillois—He is terribly in debt, and the absolute refusal of their payment by government, is supposed to be the immediate cause of his opposition to all its measures.

The Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV., and Queen Victoria's uncle) had entered the Navy in 1780 and served at Gibraltar, St. Vincent, and the West Indies. The jovial and popular sailor had hoped for a command when the war began, but this was refused, though he was made rear-admiral of the red; and his disappointment threw him into the arms of his brothers in opposition to the King; and also, parenthetically, into those of Mrs. Jordan. The King had long done what he could to prevent this companionship with the Prince of Wales, to which end the young Duke's naval career was largely due; but William Henry was of a liberal and democratic turn of mind, and when George III. signed his patent as Duke of Clarence it was with the remark: "I well know that it is another vote added to Opposition."

Captain Edward Pellew (afterwards Viscount Exmouth) had already distinguished himself both in the *Carleton* and later in the *Pelican*, in which he had run three French privateers ashore on the island of Bass in 1782. In this first naval engagement of the war he was in command of the *Nymphe*, a 36-gun frigate whose crew had been hastily recruited from the Cornish mines. After a desperate fight he captured the larger and better-armed French frigate *Cléopâtre*, and received the honour of knighthood.

Mrs. Montagu's devotion to her "Primate" was unfailing, and her visit to him at Clifton was, in spite of his illness and increasing infirmity, greatly enjoyed by both of them:

> Of all objects of contemplation, the most delightful is, to see a person of his age making the chief pleasure of his life arise from energies which will obtain felicity in the next. His Grace shew'd me the plans of Farm Houses, and Cottages, he had erected on his estate near Rokeby, in such a manner as will give prosperity to his Tenants, and comfort and subsistence to the Cottagers; to all these he has restricted the Rent, that the avarice of a future Landlord, and the extortions

of Stewards may not encroach on his benevolent institutions. As the Irish derive a great part of their subsistence from the linnen manufacture his Grace has built large rooms for the purposes of spinning and weaving, and has allotted garden and field to each Cottage.

From Clifton she paid a four days' visit to the Dowager Duchess of Beaufort at Stoke, with the beauties of which she was greatly struck. She also passed a day with Miss H. More and her sisters: "I need not say I passd it delightfully, but as bitter is mixd with the sweet in the cup of human life I was grieved to find she had lately sufferd much from her old complaints, and is still very unwell."

To Mrs. Carter

Aug. 18.

I am surprised that you have not read Dr. Beatties last Work, but indeed political pamphlets, and novels are the new publications most attended to.

I suppose you have heard that Miss Burney is married to a Monsieur d'Arblay a french Emigrant. They now "Live in a cottage on love" in Mr. Lock's park, but I hope Monsieur will recover whatever property he formerly possessd. Mrs. Charlotte Smiths eldest daughter is also married to an Emigrant. The late events in France make me sorry to have french blood mixed with english.

Fanny Burney's marriage took place at Mickleham Church on July 28th.

Matthew, writing to his aunt to let Woodhouse attend a meeting about fishing licenses, says:

The high price of salmon tends to raise the wages of pitmen and other labourers in as much as it increases the difficulty of their subsistance.

Writing in December from Catton, her sister, who had long been in declining health, says:

My hopes in Lord Howe are grown very dead. Surely tho the wind bloweth where it listeth some intelligence might have been conveyed before this month. Its detaining Lord Moira so long from the place of his destination is a sad thing as very good effects might have been hoped from his joining the Royalists in Brittany, and delay may frustrate their plans.

Dec. 16, 1793.

Completely has Lord Howe disappointed us all at last. It wears a strange appearance, I want much to hear the general opinion that is formed of his conduct, my total ignorance in such affairs force me to suspend forming any till I learn what those who are better judges think of it. I hope we shall not soon again hear of him in command. It was very fortunate for [the] Ministry that the account of his unsuccessful procedure was accompanied by such good news from other parts. The Capture of St. Domingo and the Duke of Brunswic's great victory will put people in good humor, wherein they wou'd probably otherwise have been rather deficient, as public prejudice was not in his favor before this late trial of his abilities. Miss Burneys marriage seems one of the most romantic I ever heard of, a man who has neither fortune in present or expectancy, no means of livelihood, nor scarcely a Country which he can call his, wanted a much richer wife than Miss Burney, who has scarcely an independance for herself. If the Lockes encouraged the union they are still more to be wondered at, as they cou'd not be blinded by passion.

Lord Howe, who was in command of the Channel Fleet, had spent these latter months dodging in and out of Torbay, to the great disappointment of the arm-chair naval critics. He had reached the conclusion that keeping a fleet at sea to watch an enemy in port was a mistake; a decision that has been greatly canvassed since, and was doubtless re-argued in many a gun-room at Scapa and Rosyth. Lord Howe's caution, ever a distinguishing feature of his character, brought him many critics; and though often justified, could not be illustrious. He was now nearly seventy, but was to achieve one more signal victory before his retirement.

Fanny Burney's marriage at this moment to a French officer caused a considerable flutter among her friends. D'Arblay had quitted France with Lafayette and Narbonne, and was intimately associated with Necker's daughter, Madame de Staël. Dr. Burney greatly disapproved the marriage, and feared his daughter's royal pension might be discontinued, which would involve them in absolute penury. M. D'Arblay was a guest at Montagu House with Matthew and his wife shortly before the wedding, and Fanny, writing to Mrs. Waddington to tell her of it, adds : " As I do not correspond with Mrs. Montagu and it would be awkward to begin on such a theme, I beg that when you write you will say something for me."

It is tantalising that as events in France marched to their climax, our lady's letters, owing to failing eyesight, grow fewer and briefer, and her interests, as age advanced, become more and more centred in her immediate surroundings. There are no very early letters of this year, and consequently no reference to the execution of Louis XVI. on January 21 ; whilst to that of Marie Antoinette in October she merely refers in a sentence to Mrs. Carter : " I cannot bear to enter into the cruel manner in which the Parisians treated their poor Queen at her trial and execution." Mrs. Montagu had a considerable number of French friends, émigrés, and acquaintances since her Paris visit of 1776, amongst her visitors and correspondents, but the capture and subsequent evacuation of Toulon this autumn, in which they were so particularly interested and involved, does not seem to be mentioned.

Through Mr. Jerningham she had invited the French colony in London to the concert she gave at Montagu House in February, but a letter from the Marquis de Duras explains their absence :

No. 25 UPPER GROSVENOR STREET.

Le Chev^{er} Jerningham est prié par le M^{qs} de Duras le P^{ce} de Léon et toute la brillante jeunesse francoise que Madame Montagu a bien voulû permettre d'assister demain á son concert de lui faire agréer leur reconnoissance et en meme tems leurs regrets de ne pouvoir profitter de cette faveur ; ils pensent que l'époque du malheureux evenement qui les met en dœuil est encore trop recente pour pouvoir se permettre une aussi agréable distraction. . . .

There are letters from the Prince and Princesse de Leon, L'Archevêque de Narbonne, and others, with similar charming apologies and compliments, and it seems more than probable that Mrs. Montagu's sympathy with the émigrés expressed itself in very practical terms, through her nephew.

1794

DEATH OF THE PRIMATE OF IRELAND—THE ENGLISH JACOBINS

Failing eyesight. The Prince of Wales. Lady Cremorne. At Covent Garden Theatre, etc. Howe's Victory of First of June. Celebrations in town. Montagu goes to Denton. Trouble at the collieries. Mrs. Montagu at Sandleford. Arthur Young. Letter from Dr. Blagden. Alarms of invasion. General Pichegru. Prince of Wales' engagement. Sir Joseph Banks. Lord and Lady Plymouth at Naples. Death of the Primate. His will. Matthew Robinson becomes Lord Rokeby. Morris Robinson.

The failure of Mrs. Montagu's eyesight had now made writing a difficult and often an impossible task, and her letters consequently became both fewer and briefer. Outside the family, Mrs. Carter was still her most regular correspondent; but several letters occur this year from Sir Charles Blagden, the Edinburgh physician, whose acquaintance has already been referred to. When she went to Sandleford as usual for the summer months her niece kept her posted in town news from Manchester Square or Shooter's Hill. She writes:

June 2nd.

Many in this age, endeavour to dance out of it ; the Princes illness is imputed to violent exercise in the morning, and the drinking of cold lemonade during the time of his dancing at a Ball at the Duchess of Gordons— He has been blooded eight times, and yesterday was not out of danger ; I have not heard anything of him to day, but that he is attended by four Physicians, which is I think enough to kill even Hercules.

To Mrs. Carter, her old friend reported from Sandleford in June:

> I calld on Lady Cremorne the day before I left London, and found her looking well, and you know she is always doing good, and health of body and benevolence of mind are sweet and important blessings. Her Ladyship had the goodness to shew me the place, which is much improved since I saw it last, and the House and Grounds are very delightfull, and I hope they will long enjoy it.

This was Cremorne House or Farm, at the western river-side of Chelsea, built some half-century back by the Earl of Huntingdon, and the scene of Whitefield's preaching to the nobility, at which Lords Chesterfield and Bolingbroke both "behaved quite well." Lord Dartrey, who was created Viscount Cremorne in 1785, altered and enlarged the house with the help of Wyatt. Queen Charlotte often visited Lady Cremorne here, and it was here, in 1791, that Mrs. Carter was introduced to her Majesty.

Neither failing eyesight nor advancing years sufficed to quench the old prioress's love of entertainment. Early in the year she had written to her sister:

> I did not suffer from my amusement at Covent Garden, and had the pleasure of hearing my Friends Drama much applauded, though every part but Mrs. Popes was very ill performd. To convince you that my health is not impaired I will inform you that the next day I did the honours of my table to a large party composed of Sir Joseph Banks, the Bishop of Landaff and all our distinguished Philosophers; on Thursday last I was at a crowded Drawing Room, and today Lord and Lady Harrowby and several of their and my acquaintance are to dine with me; tomorrow I am to dine with Montagu, and on Monday they are to meet a large party at dinner here.

Hannah More, the Marshall Conways, and Pettit Andrews, the antiquarian magistrate, were amongst her guests a little later, and it was only with extreme reluctance that she decided to decline an autumn visit to Badminton.

More than thirty years back, in one of her early letters to Mrs. Carter, she had written at a moment of rare despondency:

> I will own I often feel myself so weary of my journey through this world as to wish for mere rest, a quiet sabbath after my working days; but when such time shall come perhaps some painful infirmity may find my virtue employment; but all this I leave to him who knows what is best . . . if late in life I should be busy from mere choice, pray chide my ill-timed activity, and send me to my easychair by the fireside.

But the resolutions of forty do not often become the actualities of seventy-five.

The play at Covent Garden must, I imagine, have been Edward Jerningham's *Siege of Berwick*, which was performed there for five nights in the previous November; Mrs. Pope, Garrick's child actress and Kitty Clive's successor, taking the part of Ethelberta, and Macready taking a minor character. It was not a success.

> *June.*
>
> I had the pleasure of seeing Lady Charlotte Wentworth yesterday who gave me the earliest information of the good news from Lord Howe and which the papers this day confirm. His capture of five ships of the line and a Frigate is a very important event at this time to the Publick and will give great joy to his Lady and our friend Mrs. Howe.

Howe's victory of the Glorious First of June off Ushant was particularly welcome news of a war that was going none too brilliantly for the allies; but great as was the achievement of the old admiral of the Channel Fleet, the convoy of provision ships from America, of which France was desperately in need, got safely to port, though the fleet sent out for their protection was practically annihilated. The myth of the *Vengeur*, which was supposed to have gone to the bottom with all hands rather than surrender, was of high moral value to the French, though, as a matter of fact, she had struck her flag after being hopelessly crippled, and the majority of her crew had been taken off by the British, who had her in tow.

June 17th.

The rejoycings on Lord Howe's victory robbed all London of 3 nights sleep, but it was impossible to murmur at any inconvenience occasioned by so important an event. Ld Stanhopes windows were all shatterd to pieces, and I cannot but own I was glad that he had such a proof of the violence of a Mob, as he has wishd to vest all power in such assemblies. I cannot give you any information of what has passd in the secret Committee but what you will have received from the news papers. . . .

I had the pleasure of passing last sunday evening with Lady Charlotte Finch at the Dss of Beauforts. I rejoyce that Mrs. Fieldings Son received no hurt in the fierce engagement with the French ; many of our brave officers have been wounded, and not a few killd, but great is the glory they have acquired, and great the service they have done their Country. The King wrote a charming letter of Congratulation to Lady Howe. The loyalty that was expressd by the people in the Theatre and in the streets gave one infinite delight.

Lord Stanhope's revolutionary activities have already been referred to. The First of June regained for " Black Dick " much of his waning popularity, which indeed had never been lost in the Navy.

Matthew Montagu, on his northward journey with his two little boys to Denton, reports progress to his wife from Grantham :

June 17.

We slept the first night at Hatfield ; in the evening we walked in the park before the venerable mansion, and while I was ruminating on the statesmen of the Cecil family and the very different description of their successors, my little men were delighted with creeping into the hollow remains of the perishing trees, which exhibit an almost equal decay with their masters. The next day I slept at Eaton, and on Sunday after going to Church we made one long stage to Stilton. . . .

A great dearth of newspapers at this interesting time is one of the greatest complaints I have to make of our journey. The English Chronicle a Jacobin evening paper is absolutely the only paper I have found at the Inns on this road. Illuminations and drunken rejoicings have prevailed everywhere. At Hatfield I was pleased with the spirit and loyalty of some drafts from the 7th Light Dragoons who were that night to embark for the continent. There being in their number some few more than were required, the officer seem'd to have much difficulty in settling whom he should leave behind, each man seeming equally ambitious of risquing his life in the service of his country. Emissaries seem however to have been at work in this part of the country from the Jacobins ; one of them was carried up while we were at Stilton, under strict custody.

Matthew's horses having gone lame *en route*, he was forced to halt and give them a rest at Matlock, where—

This morning I had the good fortune to meet Sr Joseph Banks, who came yesterday from a house he has in the neighbourhood with a party of his Lincolnshire friends. You know I have long wished to form a nearer acquaintance with him. I consider this as a favourable rencontre. I have been walking with him and Lady Banks with my little boys, the greater part of the morning and have been greatly amused with the conversation which has turned on the mineralogy of the country. He has promised to give me a lesson on mining in a neighbouring mine belonging to himself. As I am under a necessity of halting I am happy in an opportunity of laying the foundation of an intimacy which may be very useful to me. At all events I shall gather some knowledge on the very subjects which have lately engaged my attention. Il faut tourner ses malheurs a profit.

From her Sister

Catton, *July 15th.*

Dr. Windham was yesterday re-chosen for Norwich by a Majority of about 450 votes, but not without a great bustle. The Jacobin party, chieffly composed of the very dregs of the people, are outragiously exasperated against him, tho' formerly his warmest friends ; his defence of the War is their greatest outcry, and his present friends were much alarmed for his safety, for a pig of lead may break the very ablest head ; and wherever he appear'd a shower of stones followed him, and his life was openly threatened, but he is incapable of being intimidated, tho' so irritable that if his constitution is not strong the anger they excited, in this weather too, might occasion a fever, especially as during the nights he passed in Norwich he was not suffer'd to sleep for the hissings and the yellings under his chamber window. However tho' the bustle was great and the visible fury of the Jacobins beyond imagination it has ended with less damage than was expected. When Dr. Wyndham was in the chair he was saluted with a volley of stones, he jumped out of his chair and caught one of the [most] virulent by his hair, and dragged him to the Mayors, at some streets distance by the hair to have him committed, thus by dint of spirit got from them and did not choose to proceed in being chair'd ; but it is said that ceremony is to be performed to-morrow. A loom decorated with Crape and inscribed "Perish Commerce" quoted from a speech Mr. W made in Parliament was carried about by his oponents, and a Guillotine by his Party ; both were soon broken, but the most curious incident was a young woman of uncommon talents of about 25 years of age made a long speech in the Town Hall to about 1,500 of the Jacobins assembled against Mr. Wyndham, and two daughters of a late Doctor of Divinity stood one on each side of her to encourage her in her proceeding. The girl herself is Daughter to a phisician of Scotch creation lately an Apothecary. She is worthy of being inlisted among the Poissardes, and I should like to send her to them.

This was the Rt. Hon. William Windham, the Norfolk Whig M.P., who this year obtained a seat in the Cabinet under Pitt. He was a great friend of Dr. Johnson's, who spoke of him as, in the regions of literature, *inter stellas Luna minores*. He was with the Doctor during his last illness, of which he left an account. The Suffragettes would evidently not have recruited Mrs. Scott.

Affairs at Denton were less peacefully prosperous than usual, and the spirit of discontent which had drifted over England from across the Channel was manifesting itself rather energetically amongst the

Northumberland pitmen. As Matthew sententiously remarked in reporting matters to his wife:

> High and low, mankind have passed in review before me lately in much variety of character and caricature. Much to laugh at, much to lament, a little to praise, a great deal to abhor and shudder at, make a strange compound of recollections. After all, as Shakespear says, this is a worky day world. And it is well for the rich if it does not prove indeed a worky day world for them. The fire seems preparing for the essay, it is time to work off our dross, and to prove ourselves true to the touch, and of a genuine quality. The same persons whose conduct produces discontents are slow and fearful in repressing the tumults, and when they are luckily drawn out of the scrape by the exertions of others, they eat and drink and are supine, without the care to provide against the renewal of similar dangers.

Matthew wrote feelingly, as the following reports to his aunt reveal:

> The Keelmen renewd their endeavours to day to do mischief to Mr. Brandlings Staiths and ginns. The Military had been unwisely withdrawn by the Magistrates from the posts they had occupied on each side of the water below bridge. But they were again called out before any material damage was done, and the Keelmen flying in all directions were vigourously pursued by the Horse ; but without their being able to lay hands upon any of them. I hope this will operate as some check upon them. It is now however ten days since the first day on which they committed the depredation on the Collieries below bridge : On that day the Magistrates were late in calling out the Military, and considerable damage was done to several Collieries below bridge ; In the evening however, before the Soldiers came up to them, and as soon as they heard of their march, the Km: dispersed. A guard was afterwards placed at 3 different places and kept there during the week : Last night they were withdrawn, and to-day the Km: attempted to renew their violence. There is a very dangerous spirit in the country, and it has been much apprehended that the other bodies might join the Keelmen : The Pitmen at one time last week were rising, but went afterwards pretty generally to work. The principal difficulty lies in a want of spirit in the Magistrates of the County, who might have quieted

this tumult the first day with the greatest ease by vigourous measures.

The Keelmen are gone quietly to work to day. The Magistrates with an armed force were ready to go down the river in the Keels to protect those who were willing to work; but the Keelmen declared their aversion to that mode of proceeding and beg'd to be left to themselves, when they would engage quietly to resume their employment. This tumult at one time had the most alarming appearance, the Pitmen of some Collieries were joining the Keelmen; the Smallcoal manufacturers (in number one thousand) were wavering. the whole country seemd on the eve of an insurrection and Laines [? Paine's] principles sounded in all quarters in our ears. The Magistrates were frighten'd, the military suspected, the whole neighbourhood dismay'd. After this state of things We have reason to rejoice that it is finish'd without bloodshed, and without any concession made during the riots to the Keelmen. Some small indulgences will probably be allowed them, when they have settled quietly. I have been unwilling to write the particulars of our transactions, because however interesting from their importance, the narrative could not fail to be tedious; and because I was apprehensive it might raise fears for my safety. I have now no longer any such reason to conceal anything, and lest you should hear from other quarters exaggerated accounts, I think it necessary to inform you that from the want of spirit and exertion in the Magistrates and from the terror that prevailed with all persons, I was induced from the beginning to go out Volunteer with the troops on all occasions and to act as constable in the apprehending the rioters. By this example I had the good fortune to infuse such spirit into the minds of the Gentlemen, Agents etc. that a vast number of respectable people enter'd into the same scheme; and the duty of Constables has been discharged by the higher ranks with great zeal throughout the business: and the tumult has in consequence had a happy termination. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure to say that I have received the handsomest testimonies to my conduct from persons of all ages and denominations. At the same time that I was exerting myself to the utmost to suppress the riots I took means to secure your colliery (which was unprotected from the state of the military force employed in other quarters in as large numbers as they could spare). I effected this by relieving the wants of those in our neighbour-

> hood, who were peaceable in their demeanour, by which I obtained their good will so much that your Colliery has worked almost without interruption, notwithstanding I took so active a part myself against the rioters in my own person.

Whilst the dutiful Matthew was thus heroically defending her property, his aunt was taking her ease at Sandleford and enjoying a variety of visitors. To Mrs. Boscawen (Frances Glanville), the accomplished widow of her old friend the Admiral, she wrote in July:

> You will not blame me for preferring therefore the reclining on a Bench in the Grove, to sitting on the Velvet Sopha in a Drawing room in London where I heard tales of Woe, rumours of Wars, and relations of the horrid proceedings of the National Convention at Paris. But least you should think me quite a vulgar Joan I will inform you of some very elegant pleasures I have enjoyd. The Dowager Duchess of Beaufort was so good as to pass four days with me last week. You will be sensible that I had great pleasure in her Graces conversation, and I assure you it was greatly enhanced by the esteem and affection with which she frequently spoke of your Daughter, the amiable Duchess of Beaufort.
>
> Miss Chowne indulged me with her Society for a short time, but left me the morning the Duchess arrived here. The celebrated Arthur Young bestowd a few days of his company upon us, which he renderd very agreable. He is a skilfull Farmer, an ingenious philosopher, and a judicious Politician, as you will have perceived if you have read his book, The example of France, a warning to England. He has travell'd much, seen Cities and men, as well as attended to the cultivation of Land and produce of various Soils.

Elizabeth Boscawen married the fifth Duke of Beaufort. Arthur Young, the great agriculturist and democrat, had published his *Travels in France* two years previously; but the progress of events and the murder of the King had greatly modified his views, and this later work is to some extent a recantation.

From Charles Blagden

Aug. 12th.

Lady Spencer and the Besborough Family are *not* arrived. They sailed from Helvoetsluis, but were driven back by the contrary wind and storm of last Thursday. It is hoped that they are now come over, as the wind was tolerably fair yesterday. The Devonshire Family are at Harwich waiting for them, but knew nothing further when the post came away last night. With the convoy appointed for Lady Spencer, the Government packet-boat sailed ; she did not put back in the storm, but arrived safe at Harwich the following day, Friday, since which time no advices have been received from the continent. The Duke of York was then at Oosterhout, not far from Breda ; but it is believed that he has now retreated further into Holland. Lord Mulgrave is thought to be going to Flushing, in order to defend the place, if that should be practicable, and if not, to assist in bringing away every thing, as well as to protect the entrance of the Scheldt.

I have seen Sir Robert Herries, who has very late letters from Italy. Miss Bowdler stays there another winter, but Lady Herries returns this autumn, having received no material benefit. Sir Robert is rather gloomy in his politics, and apprehends that if his Lady does not come away now there will be no passage open for her next summer.

To Mrs. Carter

17th [*August*].

I flatter myself that the alarms the Duke of Richmond has express'd of an Invasion are rather to incite people to make such a defence as will make it impossible, than that he believes it to be probable. His Grace is always desirous of making fortifications on our Coasts, and to be sure against so daring, and so insidious an Enemy, as the French are at present, one cannot take too great precaution. I rejoyce with you that the Duke of York has retired to Holland. I wish his Royal Highness had more years and experience and less bravery. Our Allies except the Dutch are little to be depended upon, and they will make no exertions but as stimulated by their interests, and that interest centers entirely in their Treasures. . . .

The news we received this morning of the death of Robespierre [July 28th], and some of his Friends, and the sending the General Pichegru in chains to Paris, may a little retard the progress of the Democratic army, and shd there arise from these circumstances an Insurrection at Paris much advantage may accrue to us. At present I am impatient for more accounts from France.

The Duke of York was in command of our unsuccessful expedition in Flanders.

General Charles Pichegru, having been hailed after his Holland victories in July 1794 as saviour of his country, embarked later on Royalist intrigues, was caught attempting a *coup d'État*, and was finally deported to Guiana.

From C. Blagden to Matthew Montagu

Our friend Mrs. B. lent me a French Song yesterday of which I send you a copy : there is some wit in the clever application of the terms of dancing to the intended invasion of England. I am told that they circulate at Paris a list of the intended English Directory, and of the persons they mean to appoint to some of the principal offices of the State.

[SANDLEFORD, *Sept.* 23.]

By all reports I hear there is little doubt of the Prince of Wales being to marry the Daughter of the Duke of Brunswick ; I am told she is very beautifull, I hope she is also discreet, for she will otherwise make our fine Ladies more gallant and dissipated than they are even now. I must own I do not think the present situation of this Country is favourable to gay festivals and increased expences.

Poor Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of Brunswick had many amiable qualities, but discretion perhaps was not amongst them, and least of all, if she had any say in the matter, in this ill-starred marriage.

Writing to Montagu on September 2, Charles Blagden reported :

Probably you have seen our Friend Sir Joseph Banks, as a letter came from him franked by you ; and perhaps he mentioned to you a subject which has excited the curiosity of people both here and in Italy, namely a shower of stones which is said to have fallen about the middle of last June in Tuscany. I have already communicated some of the circumstances to the Ladies at Sandleford; but two letters have since been received from Florence, one of which assigns a whirlwind attending the storm as the force which lifted the stones into the air, and the other describes the stones themselves in the following terms: "Les pierres tombeés sont comme un aggrégé très compacte de petit grains de verre, et remplies de pyrite arsenicale," (a term with which I suppose you are now well acquainted) "et couvertes d'une croûte de pyrite fondue dans toute leur surface, qui est très irregulière, et avec les bords arrondis."

. . . Lord and Lady Plymouth have had something of an escape at Naples. They had inhabited a house near the Vesuvius, which they quitted on the Eruption, but the Spot at length appearing safe and quiet, they had determined to return thither: Early, however, on the very morning that they were to go, something fell from the mountain on the house, destroyed a part of it, and particularly that part which they inhabit, and likewise filled the whole building with such an intolerable vapour, that no person could go into it for a great while afterwards; so that if they had been there it is probable they would not have escaped. The Monks of the Camaldoli, (a convent on a little hill above and to one side of Torre del Greco) have again quitted their convent, on hearing distinctly under them the noise of boiling water. That they had so soon returned thither after the late devastation close by them, is a striking instance how readily men become inured to danger.

Two further letters from Blagden, interesting but too long for quotation, are dated September 15 and October 10, the first giving a full account of the late Embassy to China from one of its members just returned to London, and the second detailing Sir William Hamilton's account, accompanied by five drawings, of the recent eruption of Vesuvius.

Richard Robinson, first Baron Rokeby, Archbishop of Armagh, Vice-Chancellor of Dublin University, and Mrs. Montagu's much-loved Primate, died on October 10 at Clifton. As in previous cases already referred to, it would seem that the letters directly relating to this event were removed from the collection, probably by the fourth Lord Rokeby when making his early selections in 1810. And once again it is evident from references in subsequent letters that the Primate's will had given grievous disappointment at Montagu House, whose châtelaine had hoped that her cousin would have provided generously for Morris Robinson (Matthew Montagu's elder brother), who was now heir presumptive to Rokeby; the present Baron being her eldest brother Matthew, the old bachelor hermit of Horton, now eighty-one, whom, with the quaint precision of the day, she henceforth addresses as "your Lordship" in every second sentence of her letters. In writing from Horton to acknowledge her felicitations, the old gentleman says:

> You know I was born a democrat. . . . It has for a few weeks been my fortune to examine that matter a little more nearly, and the circumstance hitherto of most effect with me in favor of a different sentiment has been the pleasure which I have received from your very polite and obliging letter of congratulation. Your friends as well as yourself have great reason to regret any deficiency of your sight which affects your writing letters. It is dangerous tampering with the eyes. I do nevertheless constantly wash mine every morning with a small piece of spunge dippd in salted water, which seems to assist me. I can read perfectly well: the difficulty I find is to keep from reading, which I believe not to be good for an old man . . . you hardly expect any news from me; although I am not very far distant from the present scene of action. I heartily hope however, that no enemy will come to break my windows or to disturb my rest at Horton.

A French landing in Kent was expected and being prepared for at this time.

The new Baron must have been a quaint character. His portrait depicts him with long hair and beard,—appendages which shocked his sister dreadfully,—and describes him as "of singular eccentricity." Mrs. Montagu regarded him as a Diogenes, and better in his Horton tub than in polite society. She once wrote of him to her sister :

> I hope the Horton Gentleman will not change his journey to Spa for a visit to the Bath. I shall never be able to stand the joke of a Gentlemans bathing with a roast loin of veal floating at his elbow, all the Belles and Beaux of the Pump room looking on and admiring. My guide who did not know our relation said to be sure the quality did make a great wonderment at it, but it was nice veal and he gave what he did not eat of it to her and some others ; to be sure he was the most partichalurst gentleman as ever she heard of, but he was very good naturd.

To her Sister

> I find by further enquiry there were many mistakes in respect to the information Mr. Oddie gave to my Brother Charles concerning the Primates Will. . . . Morris made the Primate a visit in January 94, and I believe from some particulars mentiond by Mrs. R (but which you must not mention) they had some disagreement of opinion in regard to Morris voting in Parliament, for his Grace is a staunch Friend to Mr. Pitt, and Morris sometimes votes on the other side, and said he must continue to do so. The Primate also wishd him to go to Whites Coffee House, as he wd there meet young men of fashion ; Morris said they were Cardplayers, it made it so dull he cd not do it, and to advice to pay Mr. Pitt respect by sometimes visiting him he was equally refractory. These circumstances, tho they may lessen ones surprize, do not indeed at all justify the Primates cruel Will. One is to do what is right oneself ; if others are guilty of error it is their business. I do not believe the Heir of Rokeby will get much as Residuary Legatee, for the Primate has left many thousand pounds to publick uses in Ireland.

One after the other, Mrs. Montagu's friends had failed egregiously to make wills of which she could approve, and one after the other, the testamentary shortcomings of Lord Bath, of Lord Chesterfield, of Mr. Vesey, of the Duchess of Portland, and now of her adored Primate, had evoked her dire displeasure. Such lapses from grace were a dispiriting return for unremitting attentions and admirable counsel.

1795

ADVANCING AGE—THE WAR GOES BADLY

A Drawing Room. Dr. Beattie's health. The Prince's debts. The Wilkes family. Hackwood. A party at Shooter's Hill. Peace rumours. Mrs. E. Montagu at the opera. Mrs. Garrick at seventy. Hannah More's Tracts. Mrs. Montagu seventy-five. Count Rumford. Mrs. Boscawen. Taking of Cape Town. Potato bread.

March 20th.

I paid my devoirs at the Drawing Room which took up much of my morning, for even grey hairs must be curled on such an occasion. The severity of the weather had long kept me from performing the Drawing Room duties, and I was glad to do them before the arrival of our new Princess would increase the croud. . . . Dr. Beattie is in a weak state of health ; he has often such dizziness in his head as makes him afraid to walk in the streets. . . . We are still in doubt whether the Princess of Wales will be here till the end of this month, as the roads in Germany are in terrible condition. We are all anxious for the return of our Military Forces from the Continent, but quite uncertain when it will take place. There was for some time a report that application would be made in Parliament for paying the debts for a certain Heir apparent, but that alarming report dies away. He does not grow at all more economical, and one should think the whole of his conduct was directed by the French Democrates. Our King has kindly granted an apartment in Hampton Court to Mon^r and Madame Nazel ; she is a very amiable woman and they are now in distressed circumstances. I enquired of Miss Wilkes who calld this morning if she had heard lately from the Wilkes family in America. She believed they were in a comfortable situation.

June 4th.

The Prince of Wales is going to hire Hackwood, the former seat of the Bolton family ; it will cost him £10,000 to put into repair, for the late Duke, as it was to descend to Mrs. Ord, let it fall almost into ruins ; but his R. Highness is above a low attention to pecuniary matters. . . . I am sorry to learn that the D: of Richmond is laying out our money in land fortifications. I consider our Navy as our best security.

Excellent Admiral Montagu !

June 17.

Last Sunday I went from Church to Shooters Hill to meet a very agreable party, Lord and Lady Hardwicke, Lady Louisa Macdonald, the chief Baron, Mr. Ryder and Sir Richard Ainslie, but though my bedroom was prepared for me I returnd to my warmer lodging in Portman Square. . . . Lady Charlotte Finch, the Fieldings and the Miss Conyers have promised to be of my dinner party tomorrow.

Lady Louisa was daughter of the 1st Marquess of Stafford and wife of Sir Archibald Macdonald, late Attorney-General and now Lord Chief Baron. The Sir Richard Ainslie should probably be Sir Robert, the great oriental numismatist, lately returned from the embassy at Constantinople.

To Mrs. Carter

June 30th.

I had the pleasure of Mrs. Chapones, Captain and Mrs. Butlers company at dinner on saturday, and some other friends. We were all in good spirits, and none the less so from our late naval successes. I rejoyce the more in L^{d} Bridports gallant enterprise, as he is an old friend of mine, and a man of great merit in every respect.

Lord Bridport was Samuel Hood's brother Alexander, who had defeated Villaret-Joyeuse and captured three French ships this month.

Mrs. Matthew Montagu continued with unfailing regularity to present her husband with increase of offspring, now amounting to six or seven. The eldest boy's " inquisitive turn and desire of definite ideas, in which even Locke himself was not more zealous, has made him a little uneasy to discover the natural history of child-bearing. He has very naturally found some difficulties in the way of a perfect satisfaction on this head. We have been obliged to declare that children are the gift of God, and as such (in a letter enclosed and indited to his great aunt) you find he introduces them."

On August 4 Montagu sends his aunt news of

> Peace with Spain and a rumour of a general pacification. There is no knowing what the day will bring forth. The cession of S^{t} Domingo will be a great accession to the maritime power of France, and of course a subject of jealousy to England. The products of S. Domingo are not only greater in quantity but superior in quality to those of any other West Indian possession. But the greatest of all possessions are industry, skill and the already acquired momentum of capital. Let us have but a secure peace, and we have little to dread in the commercial concurrence of any nation at present existing.

But peace for England was still seven years off, and even that was to prove anything but secure; and there was little in the outlook of this summer to justify Montagu's optimism. With Holland overrun by Pichegru, the French Directory triumphant in La Vendée and Brittany, Prussia giving up all pretence of continuance in the war, Spain signing a treaty with France, and Austria merely kept in the field by Pitt's enormous subsidies, and defeated in North Italy, the forecast hardly promised fair weather for England.

From Mrs. Matthew Montagu to her Husband

Sunday evening.

I did not yesterday dine at Mrs. Southbys, having received a Ticket for the Opera to accompany Mrs. M. Fordyce and Lord Hardwicke in a box—I was glad of the opportunity of seeing the House and of hearing the Banti and altho my sight and my ears were completely gratified, I shd be extremely unhappy to be obliged to repeat the Entertainment frequently—It was with difficulty we could drive to the door, the house was as crowded as possible, and as far as very fine and well dressed Ladies could make it, was certainly a very fine spectacle ; But the musick occasion'd in me my usual depression of Spirits, which was not diminished by the previous state of my mind, and I came away, determining that it shd be my last, as it had been my first appearance. Lord Hardwicke was so good as to call my Servant who had a Chair for me in Market Lane, but it appeared to me to be a service of danger, which he performed with great chearfulness, and was as usual very droll upon the circumstance of John Fraser's deafness. . . .—News arrived yesterday Evening from the Continent, but it is not very reviving—The Duke of York cannot venture to attack Pichegru, who therefore remains Master of West Islanders. The other particulars have not transpired—Mr. Howe it is said is convicted of High Treason, and is to go to Newgate—He declares that he has only been the channel through which other Traitors have been carrying on their Treasons, and some think he may turn Kings Evidence, to secure his pardon. The witty have upon this occasion used Michael Angelo Taylor with their usual Freedom. He received an anonymous letter to summon him before the Council, and I understand was rather flattered by the citation. My authorities for these things, were my companions at the opera, so that you may more readily give credit to the truth of them.

Mrs. Garrick was now over seventy, but still full of activity and charm. She was an universal favourite, and attained that delightful stage of affection when she was gently chaffed by her friends over her pronunciation :

Mrs. Garrick called upon us yesterday in her way to dinner at her Attorneys who has entirely finished her business, and to her satisfaction—we urged her to visit the good Prioress of Sandleford, and she wanted little encouragement to take the journey, but was unfortunately hampered with visitants at home, who are not likely to leave her this month. She said she had had the Tickinsons three weeks, and was very diverting with her Ps and Bs. She has been honor'd with a visit from the whole House of Orange, who drank tea with her and staid till between Ten and eleven o'clock at night, and the Duke and Duchess of Yorke have spent 2 Evenings with her, with great good humour and delight, expressing themselves much pleased with Mrs. Garricks reception of them and her engaging manners—Indeed few people unite dignity, grace and respect in their manners more.

To Mrs. Carter

Mrs. Garricks various engagements prevented her indulging me in a long visit. I c^{d} not learn from her so perfect an account of Mrs. Hannah Mores health as I wishd, she sent me her last admirable ballard of which I have collected a number, and dispersed them amongst my country neighbours, who, I am sorry to say, are much disposed to rioting. I have enclosed one of these ballards, that in case you have not already seen it, you may recommend it to your bookseller at Deal.

These were the Cheap Repository Tracts of which two millions were sold in this first year of their issue. Hannah's were signed Z, and the monthly issue consisted of a tale, a ballad, and a tract, head, heart, and soul being thus regularly nourished, and Bewick occasionally garnishing the dishes.

From Mrs. Scott

Sep. 13.

I hear (I wish it may be true) that the P[rincess] of W[ales] has pluckd up spirit enough to tell her husband that tho' it be not in her power to dismiss Ly J from her post yet it is in her power to forbear speaking to her, and that if she follows them to Brighton she is determined to take no notice of her. I wonder that his Father and Mother do not exert themselves to prevent such glaring impropriety of conduct, as is his, it is cruel to suffer a young Woman so situated to be exposed to such treatment. I suppose the purchase of the House for Ly J is the first fruits of his economical reform of expences. What a pitiful fellow Ld J must be. I hope his H—ss leaves his slippers at her Chamber Door on proper occasions.

Lady Jersey, once the beautiful Miss Twisden, now wife of the fourth earl, and a very attractive grandmother, had succumbed to the Prince's fascinations before his marriage with the unfortunate Princess Caroline had been forced upon him by his father. The

Princess did succeed in getting the Royal parents to dismiss Lady Jersey from attendance at Carlton House; but Caroline was soon afterwards deserted herself by her incorrigible husband. Indeed her life at Carlton House, and the constant humiliation of the Prince's mistresses, must have been an impossible martyrdom from the first; and the sympathy which went out to her from the English people in all the later tragedy of her ruined life is intelligible enough. She never had a chance.

On the 2nd of October Elizabeth Montagu reached her seventy-sixth year. Old age is surely amongst the "difficult" ages, even if its trials are largely passive. There is little, as a rule, to compensate for the loss of friends, the decay of health, the failure of eyesight, the weakening of capacity, the galling inability to accomplish all one would have wished to do, save family devotion, recollections of the past, affection for the inheritors. So far as one is able to judge from these letters, she had these consolations in such measure as could be expected; but youth is youth and age is age, nephews and nieces are not one's own children, however tenderly adopted; Montagu was more and more engrossed in his own affairs and ambitions, and the "grandchildren" were her chief delight. "I get into my whiskey about eleven o'clock and drive in it about two hours, and then on foot I stroll about my woods and meads till it is time to dress for dinner, for now my eyes can only read the green volume of nature."

It sounds rather solitary, after all.

There was a growing feeling amongst Englishmen that the burden of the war was becoming insupportable, and that an effort should be made to come to terms with a French government which appeared to give signs of stability. The general attitude of grave and morose discontent found expression when the King drove through the streets to open Parliament on

October 29, surrounded by a hooting and hostile mob.

From Mrs. M. Montagu

GREAT CUMBERLAND PLACE,
Oct^b. 31st.

I am sure your spirits must have been affected at the account the newspapers will have conveyed to you of the attack on his Majesty's life—He has had a very narrow escape, but he bore the trial with a firm and undaunted mind. The stone which was directed at his Majesty's head must have been thrown with great force, as it went thro' the glass that was drawn up, traversed the coach and went clear out of the other window. His Majesty immediately said that it was a bullet from an Air Gun, and upon his attendants expressing their apprehensions he added, " Do not be alarmed my Lords, there is a Providence that watches over us all." He afterwards read his speech in a firm and unshaken voice ; so much for the consciousness of virtue and the confidence in religious opinions. Many people have been examined and one young man I find has been committed to Prison. The throng of people assembled in the Park and in the streets was greater than could be thought possible. I sincerely hope we shall bring some of the offenders to punishment, I should be apt to think like the Swiss in Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, à petit [illegible] fort choli ! upon such an occasion. I am happy however to tell you that Mr. Pitt's speech made a very great and good impression upon his hearers, that he divided with a very good majority, and that Mr. Fox was apparently convinced by his arguments and at present was inclined to withdraw his amendment.

There is much of an Autumnal about this, too, in rather an uncertain hand, to her old friend at Deal :

To Mrs. Carter

Aug. 20.

It would have been very unlucky for the world if men engaged in great affairs, or travelling through unknown country, had not had eyes to enable them to write their journals ; but my days pass without offering any worthy to be recorded or described, so no one but myself can have any reason to regret their inability. I cannot indeed help feeling it a great mortification in my solitary retirement to be deprived of more frequent correspondence with my absent friends; but I enjoy so many more blessings than I deserve that I ought not to murmer at some disappointments. . . . I had last Thursday a fine party of Sunday School Girls from Newbury to dinner in my grove, and all my poor neighbours and labourers to sup there. I hope there are few persons who do not assist the distressed in these miserable times. It is a great crime not to do it; there is no merit in doing it, for "what have we that we have not received?" . . . I am very glad Mad^{me} D'Arblaye will have the aid of a subscription. I subscribed ten guineas to it before I left London. My poor eyes will only allow me to assure you that with the most sincere and tender affection I am . . .

This was the subscription for *Camilla* for which, through the energy of her many friends, Fanny received £2000 within a month of publication.

A letter from Mrs. Matthew to her aunt, written in November from Great Cumberland Place, where they were then residing, records a new and interesting acquaintance:

We had a very agreable small party yesterday evening when Sir Ch^{s} Blagden introduced to us a very extra ordinary person by name Count Rumford. He is of American extraction, but has been employed in our Secretary of States offices formerly, and for the last twelve years of his life has been the favorite and effective Minister of the Elector of Bavaria. He has formed many establishments at Munich for the benefit of the poor, which have succeeded so well as to be spreading all over the Palatinate. He has some schemes of the same sort which he thinks might be established in England. He is also a man of deep science and has written upon light, and the expansion of gunpowder. I hope you will soon meet him here.

Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count von Rumford, was a man of many schemes and reforms for the promotion of fireside comfort, improved cookery, economic fuel, better clothing, and other delectable articles of faith, and must have been a very desirable acquisition in these rather depressing times. Mrs. Montagu promptly engaged his help to improve some fireplaces that were failing in their duty.

Sarah Scott, Mrs. Montagu's sister, whose health had long been failing, died at Catton, near Norwich, on November 3 of this year. She was three years younger than Elizabeth, with whom she kept up a regular correspondence to the last. Besides *Millenium Hall*, to which reference has been made, she wrote a *Life of d'Aubigné* and some other works. She had no children.

Nov. 25.

I have been relieved this morning, by a letter from Mrs. Boscawen, of the anxiety I had felt for her on account of three of her grandsons having been exposed to the dangers of the storm which dispersed the West Indian Fleet, but I thank God these brave young men are all safe. . . . I congratulate you on our taking the Cape of Good Hope. I wish this event may help to dispell the gloomy discontent which now reigns over this country.

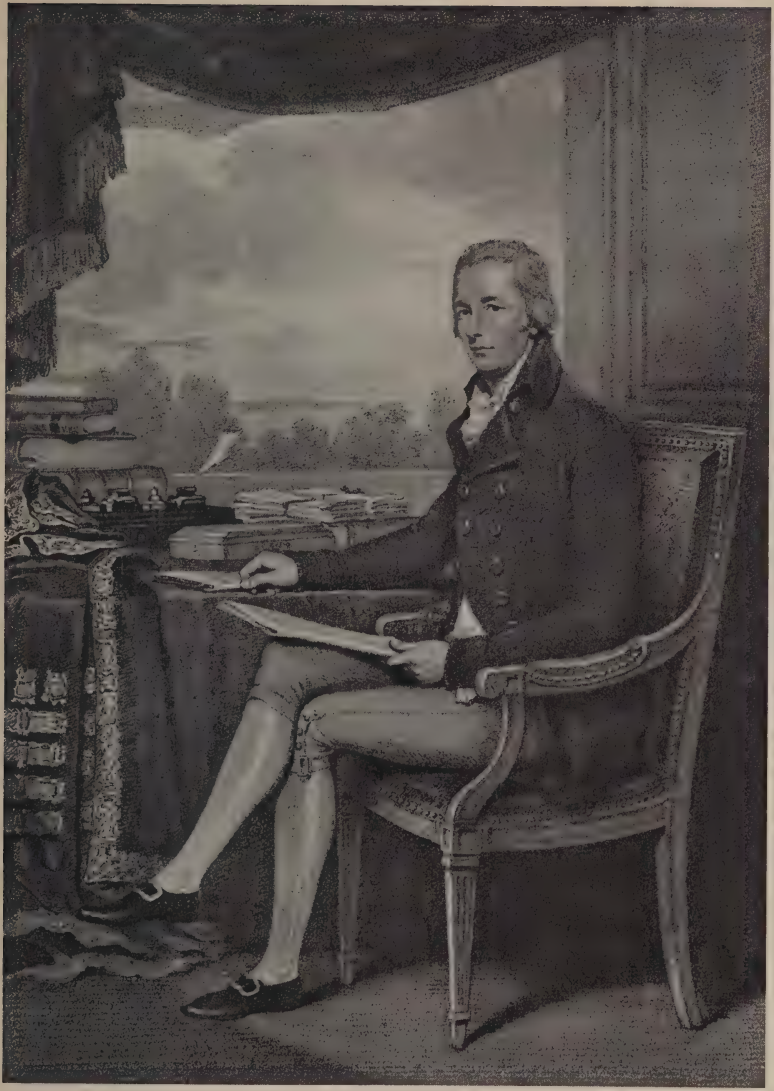
Mr. Scott and his bride the quondam Miss Bruhl are gone to pass great part of the winter in Scotland . . . it will be a great comfort to Lady Di Scott to have so amiable a daughter in law. . . .

I have enclosed a receipt for Pottato bread, as it may be useful to such of your poor neighbours who are not more nice than wise. I tried the receipt here, and the bread was so good Mr. Bowdler desired to have some of it for his breakfast, instead of my household bread or the finest bread from the best baker in Newbury.

Mr. Scott was Hugh, afterwards 6th Baron Polwarth, and only son of Lady Diana Hume Campbell, daughter of the 3rd Earl of Marchmont and widow of Walter Scott of Harden. Hugh Scott had this September married Harriet Brühl, daughter of Count Brühl, our Minister from Saxony: her mother being the Countess Dowager of Egremont. Miss Brühl had been Maid of Honour to the Princess of Wales at her luckless wedding this spring.

Potato bread calls up more recent memories of dark war days in England. The gloomy discontent of 1795 had further justification, for Holland had renounced the coalition and become a Batavian Republic under the French aegis, while the Tsarina had accomplished the partition of Poland.

The times were out of joint. The naval command had grown listless. Opportunities were missed in the Channel, lives and energy frittered away in the West Indies. Pitt was inevitably piling up debt and taxation in the hopeless effort to hold a rotten Europe in face of a Revolution, in Lord Rosebery's words, "Superhuman, immeasurable, incalculable," and a genius also incalculably great.



THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT
After Henry Edridge

1796

WAR AND DEPRESSION—PEACE OVERTURES, BONAPARTE

Depression in England. Peace overtures. The Princess of Wales and Lady Jersey. Painting at Montagu House. Lord Malmesbury goes to Paris. Mrs. Garrick. A general levy. Dr. Blagden's tour. Defence preparations.

The year 1796 brought little news likely to diminish the deepening depression at home with which the letters of last autumn were tinged. The political effects of the American War of Independence and the French Revolution had led Ireland step by step towards a position which left Henry Grattan's moderate policy of organised liberty for the more extreme demands of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen; and Lord Fitzwilliam's recall after his advocacy of immediate Catholic emancipation precipitated the intrigues of the extremists with the French, and produced the retaliatory cruelties of the Orangemen. Abroad, though Pichegru and Jourdan had been pressed back across the Rhine by the Austrians, Bonaparte's amazing campaign in North Italy forced Sardinia to renounce the alliance and drove the Austrians out of the country. Our Mediterranean Fleet, in the command of which Jervis had succeeded Hotham, could do no more than close the Italian ports, and when Spain concluded an alliance with France and their fleets united, ours was compelled to abandon Corsica and leave the Mediterranean. The exchequer was depleted by the huge Austrian subsidies and other war expenditure ; and in October Pitt at last sent Lord Malmesbury to Paris to negotiate a peace, proposing that France should give up the Austrian Netherlands and withdraw from Italy, terms which the Directory rejected with scorn.

A letter from Mrs. Matthew written on October 7 amidst important items concerning the painting of Montagu House by Mr. Borguis and preparations for her aunt's return—" your bed is slept in and I saw the mattrass at top "—mentions that

> Doctor and Mrs. Douglas have just returned from Germany thro the heart of France. They passed ten days at Paris without any molestation. Lord Malmesbury is to be our negotiator there on the present occasion. . . . It is believed that Moreau's army is completely defeated and the Archduke has done more than modern wonders with Jourdans army which has sustained repeated and severe defeats. Gen^l Marceau is mortally wounded. Buona Partes army in Italy is reduced to 28000 men. The roads and ditches of Italy are filled with the dead bodies of the French. The people of Rome will part with their money but not with their virtu : I am afraid they have long lost the last letter to that word.

A little later she adds :

> The Duchess of Richmond is dying, and Mr. Forster is just dead, so that the Duke has been already given to Lady Eliz^th by the chattering world. Lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer are at Goodwood, but the Duchess is too ill to see them for above a few minutes at a time. Mrs. Garrick called here on Saturday and left me a dozen of her fine *Bears* which were very acceptable. She looks ill and is almost blind with one eye. Lady Jersey was at Court last Thursday. I find no lady at the Drawing Room spoke to her but manifested by their behaviour the greatest disapprobation of her conduct. . . .
>
> *Oct.* 20.
>
> Sir Charles Blagden has seen Mrs. Garrick at Twickenham and gives but a bad account of one of her eyes ; the other however may be a piercer and like Lady Pantweazle she may " call up a look " and charm her numerous admirers. . . .

There is a terrible scarcity of cash in the country and it is reported that a large sum has been remitted to the Emperor without even the formality of a loan . . . some say that Mr. Pitt is to propose a benevolence or a loan of the 5th of every man's property in the kingdom ; this will be very heavy and very severe, on more accounts than one ; a strong temptation to perjury and, if not, a breaking up of most establishments. The satirical Pamphlet which was sent down to you relative to John a Gudgeon &c. upon the profession of the law, is written by young Anstie.

Mrs. Matthew's information about Moreau, Jourdan, and Bonaparte was somewhat "exaggerated." Jourdan was, however, forced back by the Archduke Charles into Alsace, and Moreau carried out a "superb retreat" from a dangerous position and passed back to France, "covered with glory."

Sir Charles Blagden, who had been making a tour from Broadlands with Lord Palmerston, reached Brighthelmstone (as it was still spelt) in September, and reported to Montagu :

Brighthelmston is very full, so that I find it extremely difficult to procure accommodation. The Pr. of W. is or has been at Bognor, and is said to be preparing for a residence there of several weeks. The aspect of politics makes many people here look gloomy. Sir Chas. Grey is appointed to the command of this coast in the room of the D. of Richmond, now Field Marshall.

Sept. 18.

The camps here break up on Monday sennight, the 26th, and Parliament, as L^{d} Mornington, who is here says, will meet certainly the next day. The late news from Germany will render that meeting much less unpleasant. Sir Chas. Grey is arrived here, to take the command. He had been settled just a week in Northumberland, when the summons for this employment came to him. L^{d} Thurlow is here with two daughters. Mr. Fox was expected, but only Mrs. Armistead came. The Duke of Leeds and L^{d} Carmarthen staid two or three days, just for his Grace to see the E. York Batallion of Militia, as Lord Lieutenant of the Riding. It is said that Lady Gertrude V. did not take kindly to his son, and that therefore the affair does not proceed. Mr. La Jarre is here with the Thorntons, who occupy a large house called Wyck, about a mile from the town. He told me that Mr. Wilberforce was now in Yorkshire, and quite recovered. Here, as well as among your friends, La Jarre has the character of an uncommonly eloquent man.

Sir Charles, afterwards first Earl Grey, who had fought with Wolfe at Minden, in America, and latterly in the West Indies, became a general and privy councillor in 1795. Mrs. Armistead, once among the Prince of Wales' amours, had legalised her association with Fox a year or two back, and was now his happy wife. Lord Carmarthen, the Duke of Leeds' eldest son, married in the following year Charlotte, daughter of the Marquess Townshend.

Mons^{r}. La Jard, who had held command in the National Guard under Lafayette, was a friend of Mons^{r}. D'Arblay, and stayed with him and Fanny at Westhamble.

1797

APPROACHING BLINDNESS—CAPE ST. VINCENT AND CAMPERDOWN

Age and failing sight. Lord Rokeby at 85. The political outlook. Nelson at Cape St. Vincent. Mutinies at Spithead and The Nore. Dr. Blagden's letters. Visit from Mr. Anstey. Samuel Thompson. Second Peace negotiations fail. Miss Bowdler in Italy. The naval victory at Camperdown. De Winter and Duncan. Ministers at Walmer. Bonaparte in Italy.

In spite of increasing blindness and the loss of nearly all her intimate friends and correspondents, these last two or three years of our little old lady's life seem to have been spent, on the whole, fairly happily amidst the domesticities which her young couple had so generously provided. In one of the last letters to Mrs. Carter, written from Sandleford on September 1 of this year—the handwriting very small and still wonderfully legible—she says:

> When I consider the great blessings I enjoy in my domestick of my dear Montagu, his wife and lovely babes I blame myself for any suppression of spirits ; but sometimes when I see the dear Family all gayly sporting before my windows, terrors of an invasion or of Civil dissensions seize me ; and this I am conscious is criminal as well as painfull, for the mind and heart should in all circumstances only say Gods Will be done.

Her old brother, Matthew Lord Rokeby, " now within a few months of being as near to ninety as to eighty," wrote still hoping that he might get her to pay a visit to his hermitage during the remainder of his days, and sending her another pamphlet he had written. He was still in health, though he admits he had been "suddenly unexpectedly and violently seized with a feaver and ague which had made him exceedingly disorder'd and at one time light-headed," and which was "caught by lying down and resting incautiously on some damp locks of wool in the corner of a chamber where I was as a Grazier seeing my wool weigh'd to the Factor who had bought it." The old hermit lived to survive his sister by a few weeks only, and died November 30, 1800.

The political outlook, indeed, was far from cheering; but Mrs. Montagu's life had reached the period when public events begin to recede from the foreground of more restricted thought and feeling.

> "Alas!" she writes to Mrs. Carter, "when will peace and order and all the felicities and virtues attendant on them be restord to Nations apostate to their God and despisers of Laws! Indeed my dear Friend the present condition of the world is a melancholly subject of contemplation or discourse, so I will not dwell on it any longer. . . . My eyes have lately been very bad, but this morning finding them a little better I ventured to employ them in the manner most pleasing to me, that is corresponding with you; but I must lay down my pen."

Nelson, indeed, had come to the rescue of a despondent country on February 14, in Admiral Jervis' glorious victory of Cape St. Vincent, when the young Horatio on the *Captain*, disregarding his chief's signal, had broken away from the line to head off the ten retiring Spanish ships, engaged them with Troubridge, thrown the whole fleet of the Spaniards into confusion, and captured two of their vessels. Nelson's independent action was this time approved and emphasised by his being gazetted rear-admiral at the same time that his chief became Earl St. Vincent.

But April and May brought the almost justifiable naval strike of Spithead, and the much less pardonable Mutiny of the Nore, which, however, was largely quelled by the loyal majority of the sailors; and Mrs. Matthew Montagu, who was at Portsmouth a fortnight after discipline had been re-established, writes to her aunt on July 2: "This place is quite quiet. 2 of the mutineers were hanged last week and the rest have been pardoned. I find the riots we heard of in London in the town had been much exaggerated."

For reference to the political events of these critical times our collection is again dependent on the letters of Sir Charles Blagden, the very observant Edinburgh doctor who had become a welcome guest at Sandleford and Portman Square.

To Mrs. Carter

August 9th.

My old acquaintance Mr. Anstey was so kind as to make me a visit last week; his bodily health is impaired, but his mind has not lost its vigour nor even sportive humour. He presented me with an admirable song, Sailors hunting, and I think it is not only very witty but may be very useful if sung on board our ships. I hope it is in the booksellers shops at Deal.

From Sir Charles Blagden occurs a letter in which reference is made to Samuel Thompson, the founder of the Freethinking Christians, to whose sermons Mrs. Montagu has already alluded:

I slept at Chichester that night, and went to Bognor next morning, intending to hear Mr. Thompson preach at the new Chapel; but Sunday forenoon was so very wet that I could not get thither from the Hotel, the distance being more than half a mile. Bognor is very full this year, and many of the families there, are of high rank. I dined at the Dss. of Devonshire's, along with the Besborough and Melbourne families, in the evening the D. of Bedford arrived from London: his most intimate friend at present seemed, from his conversation to be L^{d}. Lauderdale. I was told that His Grace is studying finance under the noble Lord's instructions. On monday the party with whom I dined were going to the D. of Richmond at Goodwood. I staid only one night at Bognor, and went next day to Worthing, where I found the Bp. of Rochester, and a family with whom I have some acquaintance in London.

Lord Lauderdale was perhaps lucubrating his *Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Public Wealth*, published in 1804. One wonders what particular branch of finance the Prince of Wales' boon companion, the Duke of Bedford, was studying.

From Sir Charles Blagden

The Prince is now absent, but expect'd to return to the Master of the Ceremonies Ball, which is to-morrow. Here [we] have just heard from tolerable authority, that the main object, namely concessions to be made by England and France mutually, is settled between the negotiators at Lisle ; and that the present obstacle is one of inferior moment to us, being a claim made by the French to the exclusive navigation of the lower part of the Rhine. There is no truth in the report that the final treaty between the Emperor and the French has been signed. The comet I find has been a tolerably good one, perfectly visible to the naked eye. Mr. Hope is here, and looks in better health than when I last saw him in London. L^{d}. Carrington sets out to-day on a tour to Ireland, but leaves his Lady and family here. The storm last Friday morning was pretty violent on all this coast. In the former great storm, glass was broken in L^{d}. Egremont's house at Petworth to the value of £600 ; the hail also did a great deal of mischief at Goodwood and Cowdray.

Pitt's second attempt at negotiation with France, which took place at Lille in August, failed almost as signally as that of the year before, the previous September's *coup d'État* of Fructidor having given ascendancy to Bonaparte. "The sword," henceforth, "is the law."

From Sir Charles Blagden to M. Montagu

Sept. 30th.

Though I understand you intend to be in town shortly, yet I wish to write before you leave Sandleford, that the following extract from a letter of Miss Bowdler's may be communicated to Mrs. Montagu, because I think it will entertain her, as well as appear curious.

(*From Bologna.*)

I was of the number of the fugitives from Verona on the 1st of June; thanks to the truly Italian poltronerie of the Proveditore, who at three hours after midnight spread the alarm, that Buonaparte with 15,000 troops would enter before noon *en ennemi.* The agitation of the moment was unpleasant, and a voyage from Verona to Venice in a very small boat inconvenient; but otherwise this alarm was of little moment to me, for I had determined on leaving Verona, both because convinced that the French would soon take possession of it, and also because I found its climate did not suit my lungs; and I should already have been gone, had not all the post-horses been detained for the service of the State. Four days at Venice half killed me. I staid about twice as many at Padua, and came to Bologna on the 15th, intending only a short visit to Mr. and Mrs. Hare Naylor in my way back to Tuscany; but the very circumstance, which had driven me from Verona detained me here. The entry of the French on the 19th was so sudden (so unlooked for, except by those who had invited them) that I had not the power of avoiding them. . . . The revolution here was the work of a single day, or rather moment. Bologna was first *disarmed* and then declared *free* and independent. My friends and I applied to both the liberated and liberators, to know whether we might regard ourselves as sharers in this newly bestowed boon: we received every assurance of tranquility and protection. I hired a casino just by that of Mr. Hare, and here I am to my perfect satisfaction in every respect; and as I possess neither gold, nor silver nor horses, nor pictures, and consequently have had nothing to do with the contribution, I certainly have nothing but good to say of the French; for so well disciplined or unoffending a body of troops I suppose scarcely ever had possession of a conquered town.

Francis Hare Naylor, grandson of the great scholar bishop of Chichester and friend and cousin by marriage of the Duchess of Devonshire, was many years resident in Bologna.

Shortly after the collapse of the negotiations at Lille, the Dutch fleet at length ventured out of the

Texel. Admiral Duncan, who was refitting at Yarmouth Roads, got information early on October 9 that De Winter's fleet was at sea, and instantly hoisted the signal to give chase. The Dutch fleet of four seventy-fours and fifteen smaller ships was sighted on the morning of the 11th, about nine miles from shore between Egmont and Camperdown, and the British Fleet, slightly superior in strength, went straight into them without waiting to form line. The engagement began at noon, and resulted in our taking eleven of the enemy vessels; but the prizes were so battered that they could not be refitted for service, and the *Delft* indeed sank on her way to England. This stubbornly fought victory ended the naval crisis and the projected invasion of Ireland.

From Sir C. Blagden to Matthew Montagu

Oct. 23.

If I had received any very early intelligence respecting the late naval victory I should have sent it to you; but every thing that I heard at first appeared as soon in the newspapers. I have since been told, on good authority, the conversation of Adm. de Winter with Adm. Duncan, after the capture of the former. He said that the expedition was originally intended against the north of Ireland, in concert with the mal-contents of that country; that upwards of 40,000 men were to have embarked on it in Holland, part of whom were actually on board, but that the English Fleet, by blocking up the Texel so completely, had defeated the plan. That lately, when it was in contemplation to order him out to sea, he had represented to the States, that it would be better policy for him to remain in port, prepared, and so oblige the English to waste and cripple their fleet in watching him, especially during the bad weather of winter; that in time perhaps they might get remiss, and that from this, or some other cause, possibly toward spring a good opportunity might present itself of sailing and carrying into execution the original purposes of the expedition. This responsible advice was, as is usual when party runs high, call'd the language of disaffection; in consequence of which he assured the States, that if they sent him orders to go out and fight, he would do so whatever might be the force of the enemy, and make every exertion in his power to destroy or damage the hostile fleet. The event shews that he kept his word. The Dutch fought perfectly well, and with great steadiness, but were not so alert as our people, particularly in the beginning of the action, perhaps because their guns were not prepared for fighting on that side of their ships, to which Adm. Duncan's manœuvre brought the English Fleet. The Dutch pointed their guns remarkably well, and lodged a great number of their shot in the hulls of our ships, many below the water mark.

Several circumstances lead me to suspect that our ministers have not yet entirely abandoned all hopes of peace. They are down at Walmer, I believe, and Mr. Canning with them, so that whatever despatches came by the late Flag of Truce from France were not brought to London, but carried to them directly on the sea coast.

George Canning was at this time Pitt's Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

From Sir C. Blagden to Matthew Montagu

BATH, *Dec.* 17.

As Bath is the resort of curious as well as idle people, I have had the pleasure of meeting here one of my old Italian acquaintances, Mr. Hare Naylor, who from his situation in the neighbourhood of Bologna had more opportunities than most Englishmen of observing the conduct and character of Buonaparte. In all respects that famous General appears to be a very great man ; but in the particular skill of a military commander I find the opinion was, that Gen. Berthier excelled him ; and that a considerable part of Buonaparte's success depended on the advice given by Berthier, which the former had the good sense to follow. It was also a prevailing opinion in Italy, that Buonaparte had more talents for extricating himself out of difficulties, than for avoiding to get into them. Perhaps you have seen a short account of the life of Buonaparte when a boy, at the military school of Brienne, just published by a young man who was his school fellow : it shews in a striking manner how very early that unyielding and energetic character of the general displayed itself, and on that account is worth the perusal. The author is of Jewish extraction, and now lives with Mr. Douglas (who married Mrs Beauvoir, formerly Miss Sharpe) at St. Alban's in Kent. Mr. Hare Naylor, being furnished with passports from Buonaparte, was allowed to travel through France, in his way to England, and met with no difficulty or inconvenience. He arrived at Lisle the very day on which the French negotiators quitted it, at the expiration of the period they had assigned for the return of our minister: on Mr. H. N.'s entrance into Lisle the report was spread, that the English had sent *Lord St. Helen's* to renew the negociation. I am told here that the French have now suppressed all payments on the public funds, giving assignments for the value on lands in St. Domingo, which are not considered as absolutely nugatory.

Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, the Chichele Professor of Military History at Oxford, to whom this letter was read, was much tickled, though entirely sceptical, over the theory of Berthier's share in Bonaparte's successes. Napoleon is not the first nor the only genius whose inspiration has been attributed to his secretary.

1798

INVASION SCARES AGAIN—IRELAND, NELSON, AND BONAPARTE

Ireland in rebellion. French invasion. An aquatic expedition. Further letters from Dr. Blagden. Cambridge. Lowestoft. Yarmouth. Lord Duncan. Burgh. Richmond. Mrs. Jordan. Mr. Grattan. French landing in Ireland. The Race of Castlebar. Count Rumford. Bonaparte in Egypt. Nelson pursues him. The Battle of the Nile. Letter from Mr. Bowdler. The *Franklin* and Admiral Blanquet.

Though the naval victory at Camperdown had gone far to render the threat of invasion impracticable of execution, it was naturally Bonaparte's aim to keep up the scare, which necessitated defence preparations in Britain, whilst maturing his real scheme for the invasion of Egypt. Ireland being, in March, when Lord Fitzgerald and the leaders of the United Irishmen were arrested, on the brink of organised insurrection, the moment was obviously favourable for an invasion in force, and the assemblage of a vast armament at Boulogne was quite sufficient to make credible once again the imminence of a hostile landing on our shores. The expedition under Hoche, with Wolfe Tone on board as a French officer, which had got to Bantry Bay in the previous January, was driven off by wild weather and not by any British effort. Lady Moira wrote that our escape had been miraculous, and Tone says: "Well, England has not had such an escape since the Spanish Armada, and that expedition like ours was defeated by the weather." As Lady

Moira foretold, "It is a general belief amongst all parties that the French will revisit Ireland."

From her Brother, Charles Robinson

CANTERBURY, *March* 1.

Whether the french will attempt an invasion or not I do not know, but I perceive they threaten much, however as we are to have Prince William of Gloucester here in a fortnight as one of our commanding Generals I take it for granted they will have more wit than to come on this coast. Subscriptions I perceive go on pretty brisk so that I take it for granted I shall soon see you as in duty bound subscribing in Defence of your Country.

We have just sent off five people to London this morning, who were taken up sounding and taking plans upon the coast.

From Mrs. Matthew Montagu

PORTMAN SQUARE, *August 3d.*

A most agreable aquatic expedition was prepared for us yesterday, but the heat was so great that we were unable to perform the half of it, or indeed to enjoy it completely; as Lady Belgrave took her Son, she begged to have our daughters—They therefore took an early dinner here, and we reached Millbank at 2 o'clock, where we found Admiral Calpoys and his Admiralty Boat, with six rowers, and an Awning ready for us—We set forth soon after, and proceeded to Greenwich, where our dinner was order'd for five o'clock; we then proceeded to Perry's Dock, and saw the places preparing for the new West India Docks—but the heat was so great in walking that Lady Belgrave was perfectly *rendue*, and I was boil'd roasted and baked—We returned and dined at Greenwich, and it was intended to walk in the park, but this was impracticable from the heat, and the lateness of the hour, so that we sat still till 8 o'clock, when we had a most delightful return by water; shot through the 3 Bridges and saw the setting Sun, and rising Moon to perfection. We got to Millbank about ½ past nine and returned immediately. Admiral Calpoys seems a most amiable Man and his good humour activity and good spirits were quite delightful to contemplate—and yet this good creature has had his severe trials and mortifications—

for ever since his noble resistance of the Mutiny, The crews of all the Ships have refused to sail with him, so that his services are laid up at a time when personal activity and 45 years service in the profession would have render'd them useful to his country.

Admiral Colpoys, who was on board the *London* during the mutiny at Spithead and St. Helen's, received orders from the Admiralty to submit to the mutineers.

From Sir Charles Blagden to Matthew Montagu

Upper Berkeley Street, *Aug.* 29.

Your Friends at Cambridge received me very kindly, and shewed me every civility and attention ; so that I saw the University as well as was possible at that season. Mr. Hailstone arrived the day I went away, but soon enough to give me a sight of the Woodwardian Collection, and besides brought me the welcome news, that he had spent a very agreable evening at your house, and found you and your family all well. From Cambridge I had a very pleasant tour to Lowestoft, which is advantageously situated on a dry and pleasant coast, with a sufficient elevation to make it chearful ; but it is not the kind of place which is suited to a man in my situation ; and therefore after seeing the two lakes in the neighbourhood, those of Blundeston and Herring fleet, I removed to Yarmouth, where I spent near a fortnight very agreably. Yarmouth unites the advantages of an important naval station, a sea-port of considerable trade, and a resort of company for sea-bathing : there is a very good room on the sea-side, where the newspapers are taken in, and the company meet : and the people I found there were mostly very conversable, some of them really sensible. When I arrived Lord Duncan was not yet gone to sea, and I had the pleasure of dining with him twice, besides conversing with him on several other occasions. He is really an interesting man, with a peculiar *naîveté*, which in an old sea-officer, and one who has distinguished himself so much, is remarkably striking. From Yarmouth I went to see the fine ruin of the old Gothick castle of the Fastolfs at Caister ; and the remains of the Roman station at Burgh, most probably the Garianonum of their authors. The latter is, I believe, the most perfect specimen of the fortified camps of the Romans now remaining in England, and shews the nature of the walls, the manner of building them, and of strengthening them afterwards with towers, to great satisfaction. . . . I have been spending two or three days at Richmond very agreably and last Sunday had the pleasure of visiting Mrs. Boscawen who told me that she had received a good account of Mrs. Montagu since her arrival at Sandleford. . . . At Richmond I saw Mrs. Jordan in the same character, as with you last year in Mr. Garrick's Box, namely Lady Teazle, and found her prodigiously improved in her manner of acting it; she is now a happy mean between the Romp and the fine Lady. The Berrys were not returned from Cheltenham, nor expected till the end of this week; but I found Lady Ailesbury and Mrs. Damer at home, I had the opportunity of going over Strawberry Hill; which is indeed very much improved, and in a manner that shews good taste. On Monday I dined at the Indian Sir John Day's, who has a house at Richmond, in company with Mr. Gratton, and was glad to see him again after an interval of many years, having dined with him formerly in London, soon after the (so-called) Irish emancipation. Mr. Gratton is now more cautious and reserved than he was at that time, and, perhaps in consequence appears to have less readiness and enthusiasm in speaking. Irish affairs were not much the subject of conversation; the little said upon them was very fair and moderate: he disapproved of the bill of forfeiture. Of the landing of the French in Ireland I know nothing more, as yet, than you will see in the newspapers.

About 1100 French troops, under Humbert, had landed at Killala, and with some assistance from Irish insurgents had forced the King's troops to retreat on August 27; but were compelled to surrender to Lord Cornwallis at Ballinamuck on September 8. This running engagement was known as the Race of Castlebar.

Horace Walpole (Lord Orford since 1791) had died in March of the previous year, and Strawberry Hill had passed for her life to Mrs. Damer, General Conway's daughter; Walpole's "twin wives," the Misses Berry, inheriting Little Strawberry and £4000 apiece. Henry Grattan had this year been struck off the Privy Council.

Lord Duncan was, of course, the victor of Camperdown. It is evident that though Nelson's Battle of the Nile had been fought and won seven weeks before the date of the next letter, news of the victory had not yet reached the alert Blagden.

From Sir Charles Blagden to Mrs. Montagu

Brighton, *Sept. 18th.*

Lord Lucan, as you may suppose, felt great affliction when he heard that the French had taken possession of Castlebar; much mischief is done there, chiefly by the people of the country, many of them his own tenants; and still greater ravages would have been committed, if the French had not restrained these people. Such is the return these savages make for the benefits of which Lord Lucan has been the occasion to their country! Lord and Lady Clermont are here still: his Lordship much out of spirits from the accident to his nephew, Mr. Fortescue, who received a severe wound in the groin at Killala or Castlebar, I forget which, and it is feared will lose his life.

A few days ago I was very agreeably surprised by a letter from Count Rumford, informing me that he had that day, Aug. 12. kissed hands, on being appointed the Elector's Minister at London: he intended to leave Munich in 10 or 12 days, and expected to be in England towards the end of September. Count Haslory, who was here when the news came, told me that C^{t}. Rumford was coming exactly in *his* place, and that *he* was going away: but I could not learn from him how this arrangement had been brought about, nor what was the state of the new office of police which the Count had so lately accepted. Under these circumstances it was lucky that I did not make a visit to Munich; as merely to have spent two or three summer months there would not have repaid me for two very disagreeable voyages.

Before this letter reaches you it is not impossible that something more may have arrived about Buonaparte; at present I take the state of our intelligence to be, that he is arrived at Cairo, and has taken possession of that great city, though with very considerable loss; particularly that on the way from Alexandria to Rossetta he had a sharp engagement with the people of the country, chiefly Arabs, in which the latter were defeated, though not before they had killed many of the French : the Beys seem determined to oppose their progress, if possible, and it is said have agreed to assemble a large army for that purpose. Nelson sail'd again from Syracuse on the 26 of July, but seems not to have been then sure that the French were gone to Alexandria.

Bonaparte had slipped away undiscovered from Toulon whilst Nelson's three watching ships were disabled by a storm, had taken and garrisoned Malta, and gone on by a devious route to Egypt. Nelson, guessing his destination and being reinforced by Troubridge's squadron, went straight to Alexandria, which was reached three days before the French; whom, not being found there, he proceeded to hunt in vain for a month, returning on August 1 to find the French war fleet lying at anchor in Aboukir Bay. The Battle of the Nile only began at sundown; at 10 o'clock the *Orient* blew up; before midnight the French vanguard had been destroyed; the centre was crushed, and by morning the enemy Mediterranean fleet had ceased to be; of thirteen sail, nine were captured, two blown up or burnt. The victory was complete, Bonaparte was isolated, and the Mediterranean was ours.

From Thomas Bowdler

I assure you that my English Blood was not a little moved when I saw Admiral Blenquets Cabin, when I sat in His *broken* Chair, and held in my Hands *twothirds* of His long Telescope, one third having been carried away by One of Nelsons Balls. All this was not a little heightened by conversing at the same moment with the Officers and Seamen who fought on that Night, being shewn everything by them, and hearing their Descriptions and Anecdotes of the Battle. I do confess that I held my Manhood cheap when any spoke who fought with Nelson on the 1st of August. The Officers all agreed that P—'s Account of the Engagement as given in the intercepted Letters, is accuracy itself, and may be perfectly depended on. I did not go on board the other Ships, for my Legs were not equal to the Task, but I understood that they are all as much damaged as the Franklin, and till they have been taken into Dock and examined by the Ship Wright, no body can say whether any of them can be rendered fit for any future Service. The Franklin was quite a New Ship, yet they all agreed that if they had met with bad Weather, it would have been very difficult to have navigated Her, or any of the Prizes, from Gibraltar to Plymouth.

Admiral Blanquet du Chaila fought the *Franklin* at the Battle of the Nile. His ship took the combined fire of the *Swiftsure*, *Defence*, *Leander*, and *Orion* in the final phase of the battle, and was severely mauled before she struck her colours. The French, whose casualties were four times the number of ours, fought like heroes, but stood no chance against Nelson's amazing tactics, and the magnificent spirit which his leadership inspired in all ranks through that triumphant night.

1799–1800

RETIREMENT, ILLNESS, AND DEATH

Quiet retirement. Blindness. "Disobedience." Return from Sandleford. Winter in Portman Square. An evening on the Thames. Last illness and death. The chimney sweeps. Mrs. Montagu's beneficence. Condolences from Mrs. Boscawen, the Bishop of Durham, James Beattie, and Hannah More. Burial at Winchester Cathedral.

THE year 1799 was one of quiet retirement, at Sandleford chiefly, where her niece and family (now numbering ten) kept Mrs. Montagu company during Matthew's absences either in London or at Denton. Though her eyesight had failed rapidly of late and was now almost entirely gone, her general health remained fairly good, and she was able to entertain a few friends from time to time, such as Miss Hervey and Mr. Bowdler, and to interest herself in a scheme for enlarging the grounds of the Priory. Whatever may have been her failings in the domain of the heart, her complete devotion to the interests of her adopted family during these latter years is strikingly, and indeed quite touchingly, exhibited in all her correspondence; and though the letters grew shorter and shorter, the laments and apologies of her poor weak eyes more and more frequent, and the number of her correspondents less and less, it is evident in all that it was more and more for them and in them that she had her being, and spent her thoughts. Indeed, the last letter of all that I have found in her own hand is a brief note to Matthew, her "dearest and most excellent Friend," begging that he would take care of the health that was so precious, and "as my dear little friend [his wife] has such a dull retirement here and has sometimes the pain in her head, I think it would be best for you to come to Sandleford as soon as will be convenient to you."

Some extracts from a letter of Mrs. Matthew Montagu to her husband, written from Sandleford, October 3, will convey a sufficient idea of the family story and interests of this autumn. Her husband was in town attending his parliamentary duties and, incidentally, taking advantage of a bachelor existence in his aunt's house at Portman Square to renew and entertain a number of old acquaintances:

> I do not like the news from Holland and believe that at the end of this year you will be as far removed from peace as ever. Why would Lord Chatham go abroad? I tremble lest we should read his name amongst the slain in the next Gazette. . . . Our weather is severe and detestable, apres la pluie vient la pluie, and not le beau tems according to the proverb. . . . A cargo of entertaining books would be a boon if you could procure them from Hookham. Your aunt is still in the middle of Disobedience, and we in the absurdity of Cecilia's scruples, remonstrances and insensible conduct to Delvile.

Matthew was perhaps more profitably engaged:

> I accompanied Sir Charles Blagden on Thursday to the dinner at the Royal Society, and heard a paper of Dr. Herschel's read to a numerous and respectable audience, among whom I found Mr. Tooke the author of the life of Catherine the Second, together with a Mr. Hatchett who has been a great traveller through Russia and Poland and other parts.

William Tooke was the Kronstadt chaplain who published a series of books on Russia. Charles Hatchett, F.R.S., the chemist, whose works and collections are described by Thomas Faulkner, lived in the charming old Belle Vue House in Cheyne Walk, which his father built.

At the end of October Lord Sandwich, Miss Poyntz, and the Hartleys dined at Sandleford; and in November the whole family came up to town in two detachments. Mrs. Carter reported her old friend as

> in perfect good health and spirits, though she has totally changed her mode of life; she never goes out except to take the air of a morning . . . lets in nobody in the evening, which she passes in hearing her servant read, as alas! her eyes will not suffer her to read herself. I flatter myself that this pause of exertion will restore her to us . . . and that a taste for the comfort of living quietly will for the future prevent her from mixing so much with the tumults of the world as to injure her health.

But Hannah More's insight into the character of their mutual friend was really the truer one: "I had rather for my part live in our cottage at Cheddar. She is made for the great world, and is an ornament to it. It is an element she was born to breathe in."

The winter was spent quietly at Portman Square. Her writing had now entirely ceased, and Dr. Burney spoke of her as "so broke down as not to go out, almost wholly blind, and very feeble"; but from the letters between Matthew and his wife, when one or other happened to be absent, it is clear that her mental activities were far from being yet extinguished, and she was helping to plan rearrangements of the dairy and poultry yard at Sandleford, reminding her nephew about insurance renewals and so on; and though making Montagu liberal allowances for all expenditure, she still retained control of the purse. Her nephew went down to Sandleford in March 1800 with a contingent of his boys, leaving his wife and the girls with the aunt at Portman Square, and remained there till May or June. In April and May Mrs. Montagu junior reports:

From Mrs. Matthew Montagu to her Husband

PORTMAN SQUARE, *April 5th.*

Of publick news, the most fatal has been the blowing up of the Royal Charlotte near Leghorn 110 gun ship, with the loss of 700 Souls. Lord Keith was on shore, and some of the officers with 150 of the men were saved. A Pope has been suddenly chosen at Venice, Cardinal Chiaramonte by name who was formerly Bishop of Tivoli ; rich offerings are carrying to the Conclave. The King of Naples is preparing to enter into his own Kingdom. Malta is dayly expected to surrender, and Genoa is bombarded—The French Fleet have put into Brest again upon hearing that ours was out ; It is said there are 20,000 Men on Board, but nobody can conjecture their destination.

Massena, duc de Rivoli, was starved into capitulation at Genoa, but the Austrians met with a shattering defeat from Bonaparte a few days later at Marengo. Malta, which had been captured by him on his way to Egypt, surrendered to the British in September.

May.

Later in the morning Dudley Ryder called, to ask us to join him and Lady Susan in a rowing boat on the river in the evening, and would willingly have taken any number of our children—but the boys were engaged to cricket, and it would have been too late for the girls, so that I went Sola at ½ past seven, and we had a most agreeable evening passing between London Bridge and from thence backwards to Chelsea landing afterwards at Westminster Bridge. The evening was made for the occasion and we had the beauties of a fine setting sun bringing forth the grey majesty of St. Pauls and the rising moon over the centre arch of Westminster Bridge on our return, which with the lamps, the forges, occasional bursts of wind Instruments and [the] stillness of the night, where not a breath disturbed the deep serene, rendered the whole one of the most enjoyable evenings I have passed. Ryder as usual amicable, friendly and pleasant and Lady Susan well bred and agreeable.

Your aunt is going to take a long airing. She leaves her going into the country entirely to you. . . . She is very well but complains of the heat.

This is the last letter I have been able to find previous to Mrs. Montagu's death, which took place at Montagu House, Portman Square, on August 25. It seems evident, as has already been intimated (and Mrs. Climenson came to the same conclusion), that certain batches of the letters in this collection relating to specific events, such as the deaths of the Earl of Bath, of Sterne, of the Primate, and of Mrs. Montagu herself, were removed by her nephew for some reason or other when he was editing and arranging the correspondence of the first forty years of her life in 1810–13.

From such few references as survive it seems that during the early summer she had suffered a good deal from cough, and that her constant recourse to opium for its relief had led to internal disorder, but the final illness cannot have been of more than two months' duration. Probably the very last of her entertainments at Montagu House was the annual May Day feast to the little chimney-sweeps, when all who came to her gate were admitted to tables in the garden, where relays of beef, mutton, and pudding were served from one o'clock till four. "Those hapless artificers who perform the most abject offices of any authorised calling in being the active guardians of our blazing hearths"—who has not guessed that this was D'Arblayesque for sweeps?—waxed poetical in their "Lamentation for the loss of their Friend Mrs. Mountague":

> Tho' I'm only a sweep,
> Yet allow me to weep
> And with sorrow my loss to deplore,
> While the shovel and brush
> Are now totally hushd
> Since the Patron of Sweeps is no more.

Apology is perhaps due for giving first place to this artless condolence; but it may be pleaded that the chimney-sweeps spoke for a great many inarticulate and homely folk to whom Elizabeth Montagu had been a real friend. Want of space has necessitated the exclusion of so large a part of this correspondence that it may be necessary to say here that it contains reference literally to scores of such acts of benevolence, to feasts and entertainments, to the regular supplies of food and clothing to the poor of Newbury and of Denton; to works for the unemployed on her estates; to little grants, pensions, and annuities to a very considerable number of more or less indigent folk, whose cases had been brought to her notice.

Of the many letters of condolence which followed her death but little need be quoted. Most of the greatest friends of her life had gone before her. Old Mrs. Boscawen wrote feelingly of her "friend of fifty years, a friendship which has done me much honour and afforded me much pleasure." The Bishop of Durham, writing to Matthew from Mongewell, said, "God had entrusted her with the two most difficult talents which he entrusted to men, the powers of intellect and those of fortune. How the duties which the trusts imposed were discharged I need not state to you." Beattie, who had received a false report of her death in the previous year, wrote:

> Ever since 1771, when I first became acquainted with her she has been a faithful and affectionate friend, especially in seasons of distress and difficulty. . . . I need not tell you what an excellent writer she was; you must have seen her book on Shakespeare. . . . I have known several ladies eminent in literature, but she excelled them all; and in conversation she had more *wit* than any other person male or female, whom I have known. . . . She was a sincere Christian both in faith and practice, and took every proper opportunity to show it, so that by her example and influence she did much good.

Hannah More gave her verdict some years later to Dr. Whalley:

> With Mrs. Montagu's faults I have nothing to do. From my first entrance into a London life till her death I ever found her an affectionate, zealous and constant friend as well as a most instructive and pleasant companion. . . . Her youth and beauty were gone long before I knew her.

Mrs. Montagu's body was taken down to Winchester, where she was buried in the nave of her favourite Cathedral by her husband's side; and by her will and special desire the remains of the little son whom she had loved so tenderly were afterwards brought from Burmeston and laid in his parents' grave.

ELIZABETH MONTAGU HERSELF

Her correspondence. A notable woman. Two criticisms. Adulation and abuse. The grey goose quill. Reflections on Temperament; Girlhood; Matrimony; Society; Good Company; Servants; Old Age. An ignoramus in love. The turnpike road. Wit and chastity. Humour and sympathy. Benevolence. Business abilities. Environment. Literary work. Attractive facets.

On the death of any of her particular friends, and also of the great folk of her day, such as Lord Bath, Lord Chatham, Lady Hervey, Lord Lyttelton, Lord Chesterfield, her cousin the Primate, and many others, it was, as we have seen, Mrs. Montagu's custom to set down in her letters her summary view of their characters, as she had seen them.

If her precept and example are to be followed, her own turn for such an analysis has now arrived. When one has spent many months in reading and arranging the letters of a woman who for half a century maintained a steady correspondence, into which she put much that was typical of her character and thoughts and interests, one expects, yet sometimes fails, to reach an acquaintance that is almost intimate, and to visualise a complete personality from the various aspects revealed to different correspondents. To her sister, Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Montagu confided all sorts of personalities and domesticities, including a great deal about her health and ailments, and some delicious little explosions about her husband, when "His Honour" was particularly annoying and troublesome. To Mrs. Carter went most of her literary talk; to Mrs. Vesey, the beloved

"Sylph," her social and blue-stocking chit-chat; to Lord Bath her affectionate homage and concern; to Lord Lyttelton her critical cogitations; and to Dr. Monsey her wit and her fun.

The amount and variety of her correspondence must have been, for the times, "prodigious." "In the course of two posts," we find her writing to Mr. Pepys, "I had letters from a Polish Prince, a great dealer in cattle, one of the most distinguished of our litterati, my Northern Steward, a great Scotch Philosopher, my head carpenter in Portman Square, the sweet Minstrel Dr. Beattie, an artist at Birmingham, my Bailiff at Sandleford and many characters between these extremes."

And though her health was anything but robust, her eyesight gradually weakening, and her doctors perpetually warning her that the stooping attitude at her writing-table was particularly bad for the ailments which so often afflicted her, every letter seems to have got its answer, and in no stinting or perfunctory measure.

A collection of letters such as this is indeed a severe, perhaps even rather an unfair test of personality. The repetition of phrases and *jeux d'esprit*, which is perfectly legitimate in letters addressed to different people, becomes tiresome when they are recollected; varying descriptions of the same event to different people may arouse criticism, though they can generally be justified; while the lengthy formulae of compliment and condolence which were an inevitable part of the convenance of the times, in bulk sometimes become intolerably irksome.

Sententious undoubtedly these letters often are, but not, I think, in the derogatory implication, when allowance is made for their period. I am convinced they were never laboured; neither their style nor diction has any smell of the lamp; they flowed naturally and easily from a well-stored brain and a well-used goose quill. Readers of these pages must form their own judgement of their subject, to which the few following extracts may in some respects help them. They have doubtless smiled over occasional foibles and pedantries; they may criticise this and disagree with that. But I shall be surprised if they do not in the end admit that here was a very notable woman of her time; a woman who as a girl accounted the graceful dancing of a minuet as more important than the knowledge of a foreign tongue, yet who had both accomplishments, and could drive a dozen miles to a ball, dance half the night, get upset in the mud on the way home, laugh hugely at the joke of it all, and then spend a day in reading Horace or making a Herbal; who could conduct a Salon in Portman Square, a farm in Berkshire, and a colliery in Northumberland with equal success; who was equally at home at a queen's drawing-room or a pitman's dinner; who, with great common sense, had occasional flashes of that inspired unreason that transcends common sense; who enjoyed her wealth because she knew how to use it well; who realised how largely virtue is a question of temperament, and with all her sound morality had a tender consideration for human frailties; who did "all things with a grace and most things with ease"; whose tender solicitude in the ills of others gave her constant hours of anxiety and distress; and who was capable of enlarging on her own faults, laughing at her foibles, and attributing her virtue to lack of temptation.

In trying to sum up the personality of Elizabeth Montagu, it is a little difficult to hit the appropriate adjectives. That she was staunch in friendship, widely beneficent in charity, clear-headed in business, and very sound as a rule in critical judgement, will probably be granted readily by most of those who read these pages. That hers was a lovable personality would be too much to claim. Individually (but this is merely a first personal matter), after having lived with her more or less uninterruptedly for more than a year, I may admit that, having begun my task with a feeling so unsympathetic that I doubted whether I should ever have undertaken the bequest, she has reduced me to a half-reluctant fondness which it might be difficult to justify. She had neither the warmth nor the emotions which are generally implied in that highest tribute. Yet the woman who could inspire and retain the strong affection of men so diverse as Beattie, Gilbert West, Dr. Gregory, Lord Kames, Lord Bath, and Lord Lyttelton, and of women as different as Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Vesey, must have had much, beyond intellect, that was attractive. It is a pity that the word "respectable" has fallen on degenerate days. With Mrs. Montagu it connoted real esteem, and was reserved for the friends she thought most highly of and the personages she most revered. To Johnson the word meant venerable and worthy of regard and of honour; and in that best sense I think it may fairly be used about herself.

Two clever men, indeed, who knew Mrs. Montagu personally, though by no means intimately, have left on record impressions of her, the one in terms of embittered animosity, the other in phrases of rather peevish criticism.

Alexander Carlyle, writing of her visit to Edinburgh, says that she did not take there, as she despised the women and disgusted the men with her affectation; that she was greedy of more praise than she was entitled to; that she was remarkably deficient in genuine feeling, and so on. Old Edinburgh was no place for the success of impostures. . . . "In Newcastle, where there was no audience for such an actress as she was, her natural character was displayed, which was that of an active manager of her affairs, a crafty chaperone and a keen pursuer of her interest, not to be outdone by the sharpest coal dealer on

Tyne; but in this capacity she was not displeasing, for she was not acting a part."

Sir Nathaniel Wraxall,—whilst admitting that she had great natural cheerfulness and a flow of animal spirits, loved to talk, and talked well on almost every subject,—makes much of her want of taste in continuing to wear her diamonds when she was an old woman, says that her manner was dictatorial and sententious, and that there was nothing feminine about her, except an attention to dress and the toilet unsuited to a woman professing a philosophic mind.

Whilst contemporary criticisms such as these, which have undoubtedly weighed much in the biographical verdict on Mrs. Montagu's character, must be faced rather than evaded, their answer may now be left to the readers of these pages, who will recognise the germ of truth, whilst feeling its unfair exaggeration, and its distance from the whole truth. Jupiter Carlyle only saw Mrs. Montagu when, as he says, Dr. Gregory was "showing her off" to the Edinburgh literati; and it was just on those occasions, when she felt she must "flash," that she was least attractive and most unamiable, if she could only have been brought to believe it. Wraxall knew her better, and indeed ends by admitting "it would be ungrateful in me not to acknowledge the gratification derived from the conversation and intercourse of such a society as hers"; but both his memoirs and Carlyle's suffer from their being recollections penned long subsequently to the events referred to, and tinged by later hearsay and comment. He speaks, for example, of Mrs. Montagu's having visited Paris in 1763, and her eagerness to recount stories of her sumptuous repasts there, and the astonishment of the French literati over her lavish entertainments. But Mrs. Montagu never went near Paris in 1763, or till thirteen years later. And if an old lady has fine jewels, is it so very heinous a crime that she should like to wear them? But, as a matter of fact, Mrs. Montagu gave most of hers to Matthew's bride on their marriage in 1785, when she was not an old woman, and, so far as references go, before her acquaintance with Mr. Wraxall began. On the other hand, men like Lord Bath, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Beattie, Lord Lyttelton, and others who knew her much more intimately, sang her praises, as we have already seen, in terms that must seem to us excessive. Such extremes of adulation and abuse from contemporaries make the task of the later biographer a little puzzling. There seems no necessity for either superlative; but that is not to imply that Elizabeth Montagu was either a nonentity or a mediocrity of her times. On the contrary, whilst it was her masculine self-assertion that annoyed her detractors, it was just her strength of character, her bold judgement, her unswerving common sense that delighted her friends. In a sense it may perhaps be said that it was a varying manifestation of the same qualities that attracted some and repelled others.

The same remark, indeed, may be applied to her personality, of which one finds contemporary records that vary greatly, though it is generally agreed that as a girl she was beautiful; and the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, reproduced as frontispiece to the first volume, shows a face of great interest and distinction. Whilst one critic notes that her eyes, as she grew old, were apt to take on a look of severity and sarcasm, another writes: "Her beauty was most admired in the peculiar animation and expression of her blue eyes, with high-arched dark eyebrows, and in the contrast of her brilliant complexion with her dark brown hair. She was of middle stature, and stooped a little, which gave an air of modesty to her countenance."

As a letter-writer, though Dr. Young, Gilbert West, Lord Chatham, David Garrick, Beattie, Sir Joshua

Reynolds, Burke, and others of her correspondents expressed high admiration of her epistolary gifts, and Wraxall spoke of her as the Madame du Deffand of the English capital, it is quite unnecessary, and would do her no good service to-day, to place her in competition with the great names of her time in this category—with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, or Lord Chesterfield, or Horace Walpole, for instance. Her " grey goose quill " was a wonderful traveller, and hard worn enough; but it was plucked from a Sandleford farmyard bird, sound, sagacious, capitoline, but pedestrian; incapable of winged words or wild-fowl flights. Yet the slower-paced home-bred style has its compensations. Fascinating as Walpole's letters are, the acrid cynicism which pervades so much of them palls at times, and the reader welcomes with a sense of actual relief some rare sentence of honest praise or genuine feeling. It is so very much easier to scoff than to praise, to disparage than to appreciate, to doubt than to believe. Elizabeth Montagu held on bravely to the standard of her beliefs, the demands of her doctrine, and the faith of her friendships. If the grey goose quill ran away with her at times, it never really imagined itself the eagle's pinion that her friends were always protesting it to be.

By way of helping himself to visualise a personality which he has found by no means so simple of definition as the critics who have been content to dismiss it in a few petulant and ill-informed sentences, the editor has extracted here and there on his pilgrimage through Mrs. Montagu's letters a few of those reflections in which they sometimes too profusely abound, which may well be gathered here and may serve to make her write part at least of her own character and way of looking at life.

Here, then, are a few random selections, grouped under typical headings. Each paragraph is from a separate letter.

Temperament

If I could hope that any part of my life was such as I could venture to present before the great Giver it would make me very happy. But, alas ! at the end of every day I am conscious, that I am a most unprofitable Servant. The relieving distressed objects, only as far as is consistent with enjoying all reasonable indulgences of ones inclination, cannot have any merit. It is merely following a good instinct. The discharge of painful duties has merit ; the struggling with strong passions and subduing them is also meritorious, resisting temptations and unlawful pleasures extreamly so ; but my natural disposition, and the turn of my education and situation in life have made all these things easy, so that while I am towards the World calld a virtuous person, I am void of merit in the eye of him who knows me, and who gave me a temperament so little liable to violent transgressions.

I know nothing bad of the lady you ask after but what has arisen originally from the weakness of flesh and blood. The sins which grow on the animal part of a human creature are more pardonable than those which spring from the mind ; this is a virtuous confession for me, who never was prone to any but spiritual sins ; and am in body a Saint, in mind a great Sinner.

Girlhood

She is a fine girl ; but I dont love girls, especially boarding school misses, who are all over affectation, so that I take no very great delight in my nieces company. It grieves me to see the absurd education given to girls at boarding schools, they are to speak and move by art, a coxcomb of a dancing master, and a fool of a governess are to fashion a girl. By such guides Nature is thrown out of her way, and grimaces are taught which would deform a monkey, and a style of conversation that would disgrace a parrot, and for such teaching parents pay a great price. The simplicity of manners natural to youth is a charm and never to be parted with but from a long intercourse with the world, which while it destroys one kind of merit establishes another, and substitutes an artificial ease in lieu of the original simplicity.

Matrimony

I own it astonishes me when I hear two people voluntarily, and on their own suggestion, entering into a bargain for perhaps fifty years cohabitation. I am so much of Solomons mind that the end of a feast is better than the beginning of a fray, that I weep more at a wedding than a funeral . . ., I desire my congratulations to your family on the wedding. Marriage is honourable in all, and I have an infinite respect for it, and would by no means be thought to make a jest of so serious a thing. It is a civil debt which all people ought to pay.

I have told our friend Black, that the more sickly he is, the more he wants a tender friend to nurse him. I think most Women make good Nurses, few perhaps very eligible Companions. I always advise as many of my female friends as are indiscreet, and as many of my Male friends as are sickly, to marry ; for the first want a Master, and the second a Nurse, and these are characters generally to be found in the holy state of Matrimony ; the rest is precarious.

My Father very obligingly and kindly sent us a Haunch of Venison yesterday, remembering that Mr. Montagu loved Venison ; with the haunch he wrote a very droll letter, well describing the woefull case of Mr. William in Labour of a Law suit. I have enclosed the letter, but pray dont lose it, for I will keep it as a proof, that a jolly witty Father may have a very simple snivelling kind of a Son. I wrote Mr. William a peppering epistle about his dolours, but without effect. Think of a great lubberly fellow aged 36 or some such matter, and worth about £12000 in money, in preferment between 6 and 700 a year, crying and blubbering least he shd not get five thousand more than he has already. I pity his poor Wife, to be obliged to love honour and obey such a dish of skimmed milk. I shd, I own, less dislike your tory, rory, buck, blood, and mohock or what not for my Lord and Master than such a Gentleman-like kind of man.

By her neatness of apparel and decorum of conduct I perceive she is predestinated to live and dye in single blessedness, tho I think she too is of opinion that earthlier happier is the rose distilled than that which withers on the virgin thorn. I always imagine a serious formal nymph who between 30 and 40 grows a little precise, intends by honorable means to enter into the honorable state of wedlock : they no longer address to the passions by kind glances and engaging smiles, but prudently apply to the reason by showing they could make a sensible man a good wife ; now and then it succeeds, and a cautious man marries a prude with a sang froid that is very respectable.

Your Virgin mind does Mr. Vesey, I fear, unmerited honour, by supposing he wishes to make reparation to his Wife, for the uneasiness his delay'd return has given her. Husbands are never in the wrong. I have heard that a Confessor comforted an expiring Monarch, who wish'd he could make reparation for injuries he had done, by assuring agonizing Majesty that as he had absolute power over the lives and fortunes of his Subjects, he would not have done any injustice, and so could not have any restitution to make ; tho' absolute Monarch then felt strongly he was not ague proof, he accepted the consolation and said, *c'est vrai.* If a moment of penitence should happen to Mr. Vesey ; Mr. P. will assure him Husbands cannot do wrong and he will say "*'tis true.*"

Society

I am going to night to a great Assembly at Northumb^{d} House. I was at the Opera on saturday night, I am to be at Egremont House and then at Almacks on thursday night. I think Miss Jenny Wrongheads account of her week was not better than mine, but if one is to live amidst the Townlys and the Modishes they are best in a blaze of waxlights ; there is no enduring the fine World but in its own fine Way. Tomorrow evening I shall enjoy a sober interval with a book.

I am loth to retire entirely from the World, and yet I am unable to endure perpetual society. If I contract my circle, still it is the same fatigue, nor is it pleasant to live quietly with those who are in a bustle. There is nothing but being in a whirl that can make one take pleasure in whirling animals. If one was quiet and stationary one should give a fixed attention which would never be repaid. To be quiet and retired in this age, would be as bad as being sober in drunken company. . . .

To speak sincerely, I think no society compleatly agreable if entirely male or female. The masculinisms of men, and the feminalistics of the women, if the first prevail they make conversation too rough, and austere, if the latter, too soft and weak. Discourse led entirely by men is generally pedantick or political.

Good Company

I am sorry my Father is to leave Bath so soon, as I think the airings must be of service to your health, and it is pleasant to have a companion who enters with the enthusiasm of taste into the beauties of those scenes one is to behold. There is perhaps not a more direct way to please than that of appearing pleased. Many persons are insipid from insensibility, others make themselves intolerable by a kind of fastidious delicacy ; it is in the power of anyone of this character to impart discontent to a whole company. I have sometimes been diverted to see a party disconcerted they know not why, by one person in it finding little faults in some things, vigourously examining whatever appeard agreable, reasoning when they should admire, and criticizing when they shd commend. The good precept of nothing too much is necessary in conversation as well as in active life, for too much taste, too much knowledge, too much witt, is not always usefull to be exerted. Much of ones pleasure in seeing a fine Country depends on the sympathy of ones companion, and nothing is so provoking as a gloom or mist thrown over a fine prospect by the very person whom one has chosen to accompany one to it. My Father is much in the right to keep up in his mind a desire and an endeavour to be pleased. Age is too apt to cool the mind as to all distant objects, and it is not unusual, to see persons of his time of life so concenter'd in themselves, that their parlour fire, their dinner, their supper makes to them the whole of the World, they are as anxious about these little matters as if their views comprehended the largest system, and their utmost prosperity cannot afford much content.

Solitude is delightfull when one has been wearied with too much Society. Society in its turn will be agreable when one is tired of solitude. *Motley is the only wear*, for all the fools in this World who design to be merry in it. If I did not know any more of myself than what I have experienced since I came to Sandleford this summer, I should be of Mr. Robinsons opinion ; but I know the leopard does not change its spots, and I have as motly, and as variegated a fancy as any Creature whatever. I believe by November, tho all the stars should be twinkling in the blue Firmament, I shall be wishing my great Room was finished and the Lustres glittering in it, and myself sitting in the Center, Beaux esprits on one hand, fine Gentlemen and fine Ladies (without any esprit at all) on the other, feathered nymphs, and great buckle Maccaronies circulating about. I still abide by those lines of Fontaine which you may remember I was fond of in my youth,

> Ville, Campagne, enfin il n'est rien
> Qui ne m'est souverain bien.

I rejoyce to find that I do not fall into the common misfortune of growing more wise and less happy by growing older ; I think my spirits were not so gay at fifteen as they have been ever since I came to Sandleford.

SERVANTS

So far therefore as your Servants are the engines and machines of your domestick economy, you will soon give to the new the same movements, and teach them to proceed in the same direction as their Predecessors, but as every humane mind becomes attach'd to a fellow creature who has long served, you will certainly find the change painful. I remember when Susan left me, to go with her Husband to the establishment in the North which I had provided for her I sat sullen and pouting by the fire an hour beyond my usual bedtime, because Susan was not present to unbuckle my shoes, and now White seems to me the only Person in the World worthy to perform the office. Servants administer so much to the convenience and comforts of our lives, that I believe they have a considerable share of every worthy Masters good will. Wherever it is otherwise, I suspect him to be their Dupe or their Tyrant.

OLD AGE

I am very willing to adopt your opinions of the comforts of old age, to those who have not arrived at that period in the exercise of violent passions, or frivolous affections ; but the loss of many friends, or the coldness found in most who remain, throws a great damp upon the mind.

The intercourse of friendship in youth, is zealous, warm, tender, and officious, and the source therefore of great delight. Between old people it is generally carried on in a manner perfectly the reverse, and tho it is still a treasure, it is like money in a bankers hands, you may draw for it when you please, but it does not pay constant interest ; on extraordinary occasions it is a sure resource, but is rather a consolation in time of affliction than of much effect on ordinary occasions.

At our age we cannot make new Friends, and at our age many have been taken from us. Tho my temper is naturally chearful, yet I often walk about as if this World was one great Churchyard, at every step I strike against the tombstone of a departed friend or fear to stumble into a grave preparing for one yet remaining. It spoils the harmony of a Concert that I often recollect, that some Friend with whom I once used to share in this amusement, and had a quiet relish for it, is gone for ever from me, others who had given brilliancy to every assembly appear no more ; even in rational Society, where sensible conversation prevails, I miss some voices which used to bear the best, the sweetest, and the wisest part. These circumstances make me often look with disgust on the Cards of Invitation on my chimney peice, and these circumstances make me fond of the Country, where Spring restores what Winter took away : and here too I have another advantage, by means of an ample fortune I can administer to the comfort and happiness of many. Their woes and wants are not metaphysical, a little money carefully managed and skilfully applied will do a great deal towards promoting the happiness of a Country Neighbourhood, it is well if it does not do as much harm where you cannot personally know the characters and situations of those to whom you give.

I found a letter in Hill street from Lady Harriot at my return to England which gave a very indifferent account of the Archbishops health. My first acquaintance with him began when I was only six years old, and it has pass'd through various seasons of life with the degree of friendship suitable to them, and now I lose my friend when a friend is most valued ; young people love many people, very old people love no one ; in the midst of le bruit de la jeunesse, or the dead calm, and silenced affections of old age, the loss of a Friend is less perceived. I have however the satisfaction to know he will leave a good example, and a good name.

I look upon it as one of the best rewards of a blameless life, to be able in ones old age to give Countenance and protection to deserving young Persons ; the good one imparts to them is strongly reflected back again. Through my little Nephew and my fair Gregory, I enjoy a thousand little pleasures, that I could no longer taste in my own Person. As one has a tenacious love of this present life, this present World, it seems to me as politick to form attachments to the fate and fortunes of young Persons, as to ensure ones ticket in a Lottery. While theirs is in the Wheel, I think myself interested, tho my own should be a blank. I know it is a common opinion, that young Persons are never affectionately attach'd to old ones, but I am convinced that they are capable of a tender esteem for Persons in years, but certainly esteem must be the foundation of their affection. Caprice, and peevishness and austerity, will disgust them. It behoves one as one loses ones Agremens, to part with those caprices which the amabilities of youth render'd tolerable and its inexperience excusable. It has often provoked me, to see an old Beldame expect the young people about her, to love her in spite of whims and humours, one could not have endured in the beautiful Lady Coventry. Old folks are usually a bundle of disagreable humours, without any mixture of what makes the various compound Man a tolerable animal. Why should the wrinkled brow, the lack lustre eye, the grey hairs assume what would not be allowd to the ivory forehead, love darting eyes, and tresses like the Morn? But I have moralized in this subject as if the garrulity if not the peevishness of old age had overtaken me.

These pages have dealt only with Elizabeth Montagu's years of maturity and advancing age; they form the sequel to the story of her girlhood and earlier married life in Mrs. Climenson's volumes. The "Fidget" of 1740, the disdainful young beauty whose impertinent satire, flippant irony, and sportive vanity were so severely criticised by Fanny Burney's "Daddy" Crisp, had, long ere the date of their opening, put away childish things, and had shown that behind and beyond them she possessed qualities, steadfast strength of will, reasoned deliberation, potent common sense, which were not marred by and which ultimately subdued the vanities and conceits which the friendships of her youth had fostered. The greatest fault in her character was neither her vanity nor her ostentatiousness nor her affectations, though of all these she was and could be justly accused; but, as the Burney rightly divined, her lack of that *don d'aimer* which so transfigures life, and in which Fanny's admired Mrs. Thrale so contrastingly excelled. Mrs. Montagu was, as Hester Chapone remarked to Mrs. Carter, "an ignoramus in love." From a few guarded sentences of half-suppressed yet poignant emotion, one might imagine that, had her little son lived, the lacking gift might have been evolved and the void filled through him. But that was not to be. And when the news of the death of the charming young James Macdonald came from Frascati, Mrs. Vesey—who perhaps knew Mrs. Montagu as intimately as any one—wrote to her: "All my ideas of pleasure are sunk at once in knowing what you must feel in losing one who was such an ornament to your society, and perhaps had endeared himself to your friendship, by his esteem, admiration, and his confidence in you; there is such a charm in the attachments of youth, especially when it is adorned with every virtue and accomplishment." That attachment, too, was nipped by an untimely death in 1766; and there is no evidence of any later warmth. The whole incident of Dorothea Alison's marriage, and her treatment of the girl whose heart she had once declared "one perfect chrysolite, no flaw, no imperfection in it," seems to reveal a cold, matter-of-fact logic to which sentiment or passion were repugnant strangers. Of all extremes, indeed, whether in politics, love, or philanthropy, she had an inherent distrust. "Virtue," she once wrote, "wisdom, honours, prosperity, happiness are all to be found on the turnpike road or not to be found at all." And an illuminating sentence in her criticism of Mrs. Thrale's second marriage will be recalled: "Whoever possesses the blessing of sound understanding never is guilty of absurd conduct, or does anything which the world calls strange." It is this passionless level of unswerving common sense, this steadfastness to the middle of the road, this subnormal temperature of mind which has made finer characters unsympathetic.

Mrs. Montagu once wrote to Mrs. Donnellan in her earlier years: "I am sorry to say the generality of women who have excelled in wit have failed in chastity." To that sweeping dictum she was herself a conspicuous exception; but behind its exaggeration lies a converse truth not altogether inapposite. Putting wit aside, she would have been a more lovable woman if she had not set so stern a watch upon her heart, and lived with a finger on her pulse; if she had been less self-possessed and more unguarded.

But if this must be said, it must also be said that she lived and learnt; that one finds progress, development, advance in tolerance, in humanity, in self-perception, in sympathy, as her life went on; and that when her adopted Matthew brought a wife to Sandleford, and children filled its rooms and gardens with life and laughter, her closing years were warmed by the happiness of real affection. Of her instant and anxious sympathy in all the illness and distresses of her friends the letters give ample testimony; Sterne, Lord Bath, Beattie, Lord Lyttelton, Woodhouse, Mrs. Vesey, and a host of others bore witness to her tender solicitude and concern, quick in activity and practical in means. Much as in some respects she was her father's daughter, in this aspect they were worlds apart. His humour, wit, and cool comprehension of his world she largely inherited; and her ability to laugh at herself and her own foibles and failings is refreshing and delightful. Her just appreciation of Falstaff's charm; her chaff of Mrs. Carter; her laughing letters from Spa; her criticisms of the pompous Gray, the infatuated Hanway, the amazing Chudleigh; her love of Monsey's foolery; her appreciation of Tristram and of his fretful spouse; her efforts to evoke the best out of Tom Lyttelton; her love of the adventurous Emin; all these things have been touched on, and are good to remember. Indeed she was an admirable friend, as her intercourse with the first Lord Lyttelton and with Beattie, with Mrs. Carter and the Sylph, and Mrs. Garrick and Hannah More, and many others abundantly proves; and the claim that she had ever been "fond to spread friendships and to cover heats" is largely justified.

Egerton Brydges wrote of her: "She was good-natured, generous, candid and obliging; no one knew characters better; she saw a foible in an instant, but she generally forbore to expose it. She was acquainted with all the great literary men of her day, and her house was open to them. She had the talent of drawing the characters of those whom she knew."

Her charities and acts of benevolence have been sufficiently referred to in the body of this work; and there can be no question that, though often rigid in her justice, she was generously munificent to a very large number of people. Boswell, who, "drunk or sober," had no love for her, once suggested that her generosity was mere vanity; but Dr. Johnson—who often resented the abuse by others of those whom he occasionally abused himself—at once retorted, "I have seen no beings who do so much good from benevolence as she does from whatever motive."

Of her business ability as a farmer and colliery owner, lack of space has unfortunately prevented inclusion of the evidence; and this is the more regrettable because M. Huchon, in his admirable little Essay, has referred rather slightingly to her condescending patronage of her pitmen and workers. Due allowance being made for the developments of a century and a half in the attitude of capital and labour, the letters in this collection do not warrant any such estimate. Mrs. Montagu's farm and colliery methods might possibly shock some of our economic pundits and trades union enthusiasts; but according to her generation and its lights she was a very beneficent as well as successful proprietor; she had less trouble with her men than any of the adjoining owners, and indeed there were pilgrims to Denton to study its management. She fatted hogs to provide bacon for her poor at a very low price; she brewed them small beer in large quantities, because "water, when they work hard, is poor potation." She laid out very large sums in houses, fencing, drainage, and improvements; she employed many of her women in making clothes for the more needy; she grew acres of potatoes for the benefit of her tenantry; she established boys' schools, and had the girls taught needlework. If she occasionally celebrated a coal winning or an anniversary with largess and a feast that did not end quite soberly, if the beer was not always "small," and Wear the publican was sometimes sent as Ganimede with vessels of punch, "Madam" at any rate went to every table of the feast to drink their healths; and then established good Mr. Raikes' Sunday Schools at Newbury to teach the rising generation a better way.

By way of hors-d'œuvre, before the substantial meal of an eighteenth-century memoir, one would do well to read Gay's *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets*. Though it dates back to 1716, its picture of London held good in most respects till nearly the end of the century, and it may be taken as laying the scene of Mrs. Montagu's married life in town very graphically and not unfaithfully. One needs to try and visualise her surroundings if one is to do her justice; to picture the narrow streets and overhanging houses, the shop fronts bulging over the narrow, cobbled, post-guarded footways, with creaking signboards overhead, and wares of all kinds hung and strewn outside; the filthy kennels, deep in reeking mud; the rough roadway pitted with holes, where shouting hackney-coachmen, jostling chairmen, and insolent footmen thrust their way through, scattering mud and dust on luckless pedestrians; the miserable glimmer of dripping oil lamps at night, when thieves and footpads roamed at large and at ease, the only protection for wayfaring honest folk being a few decrepit old watchmen encumbered with immense coats, lanthorns, rattles, and long poles. Refuse thrown out from upper windows, waterspouts from the roof fronts, stenches from the uncleansed open sewers, derelict houses where lean swine and scavenger dogs forgathered, till they fell with a crash on ill-fated passers-by ;—these were but a tithe of the perils of the Londoner of those "good old times." And within doors, too, we who dwell in the days of electric light and of bathrooms, of lifts and water supply, of gas cookery and telephones, of hourly posts and evening papers, have much to divest ourselves of before we can live back to George the Third. It was not only a hard-drinking, hard-swearing, hard-gambling age; it was in many typical aspects a hard-hearted, an arrogant, an unsympathetic age. The very welcome that was given to *The Sentimental Journey* but serves to show on what parched and thirsty ground Sterne's manna fell. These things must in all fairness be held in constant memory whilst we pass judgement on a life that, being pre-eminently social, was proportionately trammelled by the conditions of its environment.

Mrs. Montagu's literary work has been sufficiently dealt with in the record of the publication of her Shakespeare *Essay*, and of her intercourse with Dr. Johnson. Creditable as it was, it is of course rather upon her development of the social coterie amongst the lettered leaders of her time than upon her own writings that her fame in this direction rests; and of these, and of the difficulties and counter-attractions with which they were faced, enough has been recorded to permit of some judgement being formed. Whatever their imperfections and shortcomings, the Blue Stockings, of whom Mrs. Montagu was the acknowledged head and forefront, did, as it will generally be conceded, provide a solution of what was a real need of their time. They brought men and women together in rational intellectual intercourse; they provided an alternative to the hard drinking and deep gambling of the Clubs; and they established the claim of well-educated women to a share of scholarly and literary converse.

In taking leave—as we must, and briefly now—of

Elizabeth Montagu, perhaps one might fairly say that the more attractive facets of her character were those which flashed most rarely, yet which one felt were there; not her learning, though that was wide and well founded; not her critical faculty, though that was often shrewd and sometimes admirable; not her wit, though that, at best, was pretty enough; but rather, after all, her tolerant comprehension of human frailties; her frank recognition of her own vanities and weaknesses; her swift and active sympathies in the illness or misfortune of those she cared for; her devotion —never forgotten though so seldom uttered—for the little one she had loved so greatly and lost so soon.

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